



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



3 3433 07481130 2

The
LAND
of
CONTENT





The LAND *of* CONTENT

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

PROPERTY
OF THE
ASTOR LENOX
TILDEN SOCIETY
NEW YORK



“‘To-morrow,’ he replied, ‘and all the to-morrow
[Page :

The
LAND of CONTENT

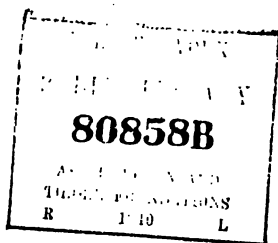
BY
EDITH BARNARD DELANO



NEW YORK AND LONDON
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

1913

G. J.



**COPYRIGHT, 1913, BY
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY**

Copyright, 1911-1912, by S. H. Moore Co.

Printed in the United States of America

F

To J.

1



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
“‘To-morrow,’ he replied, ‘and all the to-morrows!’” <i>Frontispiece</i>	
“One thing after another came back to her” . .	72
“A small crowd gathered in an incredibly short time”	288
“It was Rosamund whose eyes smiled into his” .	318



The LAND *of* CONTENT

I

IT was earliest spring, and almost the close of a day whose sunshine and warmth had coaxed into bloom many timid roadside flowers, and sent the white petals of farmyard cherries trembling to earth like tiny, belated snowfalls. Already the rays of the setting sun were gilding the open space on the top of the mountain where ridge-road and turnpike meet. The ridge-road was only one of the little mountain by-ways that wind through woods and up and down dale as the necessities of the mountain people wear them; the turnpike was an ancient artery connecting North and South, threading cities and villages and farms along its length like trophies on a chain. The shy windings of the mountain road knew nothing more modern than the doctor's vehicle drawn by White Rosy, nothing more exciting than the little companies of armed, silent men who tramped over it by night, or crossed it stealthily by day; but along the pike coaches and motor cars pounded and rolled, and

The LAND of CONTENT

a generation or so earlier an army had swung northward over it in pride and hope and eagerness, to drift southward again, a few days later, with only pride left. If, after that, the part of the old road that led from the plain up to the higher valley seemed to lie in a torpor, as if stunned by the agony of that retreat, none the less it remained one of the strong warp threads in Fate's fabric.

Yet Destiny chooses her own disguises. A sick baby had kept John Ogilvie on a sleepless vigil in the backwoods for the past fifty hours; and it was not the view from the crossroads, nor the doctor's habit of drawing rein to look out upon it for a moment or two, that made old Rosy stop there on this spring afternoon. It was nothing more than a particularly luscious patch of green by the roadside, and the consciousness of her long climb having earned such a reward. Rosy was an animal of experience and judgment, well accustomed to the ways of her master, knowing as well as he the houses where he stopped, capable of taking him home unguided from anywhere, as she would take him home this afternoon in her own good time. She had come thus far unguided; for when the sick child's even breathing told the success of his efforts, John Ogilvie had almost stumbled out of the cabin and into his buggy, to fall asleep before he could do more than say,



The LAND of CONTENT

“Home, old lady!”

So Rosy had ambled homeward, knowing every turn of the road, while the tired man slept on.

The open place where the roads crossed was a famous “look-out.” Following its own level, the eye of an observer first beheld the tops of other mountains at all points of the horizon save one; at this season the great masses were all misty green, except for occasional patches of the dark of pines, or the white gleam of dogwood, or rusty cleared spaces of pastures; the highroad, on its way to the nearer valley, at first dropped too abruptly to be seen, but reappeared later as a pale white filament gleaming here and there through the trees or winding past farmhouses or fields tenderly green with young wheat. Through the gap where the mountains broke apart a great plain stretched, a plain once drenched with the life of men, now gleaming in the rays of a sun already sunk too low to reach over the nearer mountains. All human habitations lay so far below the crossroads that no sound of man’s activities ever arose to its height; of wild life there was sound enough, to ears attuned to it—mostly chattering of woodchucks and song of birds, enriched at this season with the melody of passing voyagers from the south. Yet none of these would have aroused the tired sleeper in the buggy. A far different sound came up through the

The LAND of CONTENT

forest, and Ogilvie was awake on the instant, with the complete consciousness of the man accustomed to sudden calls.

He looked down at the purpling valley, across through the gap to the gleaming plain, and laughed.

"Well, Rosy, couldn't you take me home till I admired the view?" he asked; and by way of answer the old white mare turned her head to look at him, her mouth comfortably filled with young grass. The doctor laughed again.

"Oh, I see!" he said. "A case of afternoon tea, was it, and not of admiring the view? Well, let's get along home now."

He looked across the valley to the mountain westward of the gap; its form was that of a large crouching panther, and high up on its shoulder a light twinkled against the shadow.

"Come along! Mother Cary's already lighted her lamp!" the doctor said. "There's bed ahead of us, old girl, bed for me and oats for you! Bed, Rosy! Think of it! And may Heaven grant good health to all our friends this night!"

He drew up the reins as he spoke, and with a farewell reach at a luscious maple leaf Rosy turned into the pike.

But again there echoed through the woods the usual accustomed sound that had aroused the doctor. Th

The LAND of CONTENT

time it was too near to be mistaken; not even White Rosy's calm could ignore it.

"Hel—lo!" said Ogilvie. "A big horn and a noiseless car! Pretty early in the season for those fellows. Make way for your betters, White Rosy!"

He drew well into the green of the roadside; for, highway and turnpike though it was, the road was narrow enough in this unfrequented part to make passing a matter of calculation. The driver of the automobile had evidently discovered that for himself, for he was climbing slowly and carefully, sounding his horn as frequently as if driving through a village. As the car came out upon the cleared space of the crossroads, Ogilvie turned, with the frank interest of the country dweller in the passer-by, and with the countryman's etiquette of the road waved to its solitary occupant.

The driver of the car returned the greeting, drew slowly forward, and stopped beside the doctor's old buggy. Ogilvie was not so much of a countryman as not to recognize in the machine's powerful outlines the costly French racer. But that was only another of Destiny's disguises. The two men met on the mountain-top, took cognizance of each other in that high solitude where the things of the world lay below them; and, face to face, each measured the

The LAND of CONTENT

other and insensibly recognized his worth of character. Both knew men; both had been trained to the necessity of forming quick judgments. Before they had exchanged a word they were sure of each other; before the hour was out their friendship was as certain as if it were years old.

The occupant of the car had a smile which was apt to be grimly humorous, as Ogilvie noted in the moment before he spoke.

"I'm lost!" the stranger said, as if admitting a joke on himself. "I've come around in a circle twice, looking for a place called Bluemont Summit, and I've sounded my horn right along, hoping somebody would run out to look, somebody I could ask my way of. But you're the first person I've seen this afternoon!"

Ogilvie laughed aloud. "No wonder, if you've been blowing your horn all the way," he said. "If you had kept still, you might have come on someone unawares; but nobody around here would run out to look at you in the open."

"Is there anyone to run?" the other asked, again with the grim twist of his lips.

"Yes, but they are shy, and too proud to seem curious. There may be eyes on us now, peeping through those woods," said Ogilvie. "But you're not far from the Summit, not far, that is, with that

The LAND *of* CONTENT

car of yours. This is the Battlesburg Road, and you're ten miles or so to the northwest of Bluemont."

The driver of the car had stepped down into the road to do something to his lamps; it was already so dark that their gleam shot far ahead. White Rosy eyed them dubiously.

"Only ten miles! Jove, I'm glad of that! Mountain air does what a man's appetite! The High Court is the best hotel, isn't it?"

Ogilvie looked at the other for a moment or two before answering: looked, indeed, until the stranger glanced questioningly up at him, as if wondering at the delay. Then he said:

"My name's Ogilvie, and I'm the doctor around here. I wish you'd let me prescribe a hot meal at my house for you. It's this side of the Summit."

The other man's smile had lost its grimness. "That's mighty good of you," he said. "And you won't have to coat that dose with sugar!"

"I wonder," the doctor went on, "if you'd play host first, and give me a lift? I'm as hungry as you are, and White Rosy here likes to choose her own gait. If you'll take me home, we'll be at my house in one tenth the time, and Rosy can find her way alone. She's done it many a time."

The LAND of CONTENT

The other man looked at the old mare, and as he answered stroked her nose and gave her shoulder a friendly smack or two.

“Certainly I’ll give you a lift,” he said. “Good of you to suggest it. This old lady looks as if she knew as much as most of us. I hope you won’t hurt her feelings by deserting her!”

Ogilvie had come down to the road, and already deposited his black bags and his old brown cap in the automobile; now he was busy unbuckling Rosy’s reins.

“Not a bit of it,” he said. “She’ll come home all the quicker for not having me on her mind! It’s home and oats, Rosy, oats, remember,” he said as he got up into the automobile with the reins in his hand.

“My name is Flood—Benson Flood, and I’ve been down in Virginia buying a little old farm for the shooting they tell me the neighborhood’s good for. I never use road maps—like to discover things for myself. That’s how I got lost to-day.”

Ogilvie, leaning back, could inspect the face of the man beside him. Involuntarily, his expression had slightly changed at the name. Benson Flood was as well known to readers of the daily papers as Hecla or Klondike or Standard Oil, and stood for about the same thing—wealth, spectacular wealth. The name had heretofore interested John Ogilvie neither

The LAND *of* CONTENT

more nor less than any of the others; now, sitting beside its possessor, it carried a different and more personal significance. It seemed almost grotesquely unreal that an actual living person, a man to be met at a mountain crossroads, could calmly introduce himself as Benson Flood, and be as frankly and comfortably hungry as anyone else. These thoughts, however, took but an instant.

“Well, you’ve seen a bit of country, anyway,” he replied, quite as if his mind were not busy on its separate line of speculation. Flood’s face was not what he would have expected to find it. It had not lost its lean ruggedness, nor put on those fleshly signs of indulgence that are so apt to follow the early acquisition of great wealth. The well-cut mouth was very firm, and there was something of the idealist, the questioner, the seeker of high things, about the eyes and brow that Ogilvie found puzzling and interesting.

“Yes; and what a view there was from that crossroads up there! I wish I could transplant my Virginia farm to that mountain-top.”

“A good many men have seen that view; the army retreated from Battlesburg along this old pike, you know.”

“Ah, Battlesburg! I’m from the West, where history is not much more than we fellows have made

The LAND *of* CONTENT

it; it fairly stirs my blood to come across a place like Battlesburg, with its monuments, and its memories, and where Lincoln spoke, and all that. I'm going to run up there to-morrow, if the hotel people can set me on my way early enough."

"I'm afraid you'll have to trust me to do that," said Ogilvie. "There's my house, there where the light's in the front porch; and—I hope you won't think I've kidnapped you, but I'm going to keep you over night. The hotels aren't open at this time of year."

As the car stopped before the doctor's cottage, Flood turned to his host. "Oh, I say! That's mighty good of you! Won't I put you out? Isn't there some place I can go to?"

But Ogilvie laughed. "There is not, but I wouldn't tell you if there was! Why, Mr. Flood, I haven't talked to anyone from beyond the mountains for six months!"

II

SPRING, that stole upon the mountains with an evanescent fragrance, and unfolding of delicate greens and shy opening blossoms, swept into the city with a blaze of life and color, with a joyous outpouring of people and bedizening of shop-windows; and nowhere else was its influence so marked as on the Avenue. Motor vehicles crowded from curb to curb, held back or permitted to sweep onward by the uplifted hands of mighty creatures in uniform, horse-back and afoot, imperturbably calm, lords and rulers and receivers of tribute; the sidewalks swarmed with people, lines of men and women swinging northward and southward, some buoyantly conscious of new-fashioned raiment, their eyes apparently unaware of the jostling crowd, some with tiny dogs under their arms, some looking at the passing faces, or bowing to people in motor cars, a few glancing into the brilliant windows of the shops, a few chatting and laughing with companions.

Benson Flood, returned from Virginia the day before, was one of those who, marching northward, looked searchingly into the faces of the people he passed, and frequently glanced into the automobiles on his right. No one in all that army was more

The LAND of CONTENT

aware than he of the vivid beauty of the moving scene. For three years he had watched the Avenue burst into life and color under the recurring influence of Spring; but he had lost none of the keenness of his first perception of it, none of his delight in its unique splendor, none of the thrill of having achieved the right to be a part of it.

Achievement, indeed, was what Benson Flood stood for. Beginning life in a Western town, his subsequent history was one of those spectacular dramas common enough in American progress, yet always thrilling in their exhibition of daring and courage, in their apparent forcing of opportunity, their making and taking of chances, their final conquest of power and wealth. Flood's career differed from many another only in two particulars: as early as the age of forty he had reached that point where he could afford to lay aside his more public pursuits; and at the same time, perhaps because he had grown no older in the cult, the mere accumulation of wealth ceased to be the first object in life for him. He was the offspring of one of the curious mixtures of race that distinguish America; and doubtless from some ancestor of an older civilization he inherited a taste and longing for that to which, in his youth and early manhood, he had been an absolute stranger. When he left his West behind him, he faced towards those

The LAND *of* CONTENT

gentler things which, in his fine imagination and the perception trained by the exigencies of his career, he felt to be more desirable than anything he had yet attained to. Certainly they had become to him, untasted though they were at the time, of greater importance. He valued his experiences, his labors, his millions; but they were not enough. However unaccustomed to it he might be, he knew very definitely what he now wanted; and a winter in New York, with a year or two in Europe, had put him in a fair way of adding the fulfillment of his later ambition to his earlier achievements. A race-winning yacht, a few introductions among people who welcome the owners of mines and large fortunes, these gave a social background which, with the excellent foundation of his millions, served very well in New York, and taught him much about those things which he was now so sure of wanting. It was not strange that he believed them to be summed up, embodied, realized to the utmost, in one woman.

He was looking for her as he walked up the Avenue on this April afternoon; she loved its life and color and change, and was apt to pass over some part of it as often as she could. So Flood watched the passing women for the face that could so magically quicken his pulses. Many sought his recognition, yet he was oblivious of their number, ignoring the vari-

The LAND *of* CONTENT

ous half-invitations that were tentatively made him—the leaning forward of one in a limousine, the slight pause or lingering look of another.

His thoughts were still full of his journey, and Spring on the Avenue only brought up memories—so lately realities—of the breath of the woods, the wind in the tree-tops, the brown and green of fields so lately seen; and Flood had reached that state of mind where all that was sweet in memory, all that was beautiful in the present, all that he desired from the future, only reminded him of the one woman.

Several times, through the crowd, he thought he saw her, and went more quickly forward; but as often he fell back, disappointed. Suddenly, in answer to a firm grasp on his arm, he turned.

“Ah, Marshall!” he said, not too enthusiastically.

“I say, Benny, is it a wager? You’re stalking up the Avenue without a word or a look for anybody, trampling on people, mowing them down by the thousand like a Juggernaut from the West! That’s how I traced you, by the bodies strewn in your path.”

Flood was always amused by Pendleton’s nonsense; yet now he smiled and said nothing. To-day it was not Pendleton he wanted to see. The other seemed to divine this.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

"You don't seem very sociable," he remarked. "Did your lone trip to Virginia give you a confirmed taste for solitude?"

Again Flood smiled; he could no more resist Pendleton's aimless chatter than a large dog can resist the playfulness of a small one. His side-long glance had to go downwards to meet Marshall's.

"Quite the contrary," he said. "I've bought the old Gore place in Berkeley and now I want to fill it up with guests. I count on you to help me out, Marshall."

"Right you are! Come up to Mrs. Maxwell's with me, and we'll get dear Cecilia to help us out, too!"

Flood's face suddenly hardened a little. It was an unconscious trick of his under the stress of any sudden emotion; in effect, it was as if a hand had passed over his features, leaving them expressionless. Many a game had he won, mastered many a situation, by means of it.

He paused perceptibly before he answered Pendleton. Then he said, "I shall have to leave that to you!"

"You're too modest, Benny," Pendleton said, shaking his head. "Remember your taxes, man, not to mention your bank account, and don't let dear Cecilia awe you."

The LAND of CONTENT

It was presently made evident enough that the dear Cecilia in question held nothing of awe for Pendleton himself; for they were no sooner in the rather austere little drawing room than he bent over Mrs. Maxwell, and, quite deliberately ignoring the five or six earlier comers, whispered in her ear:

“Get rid of the crowd, Cecilia; we’ve great news for you!”

Mrs. Maxwell was apparently oblivious of his whisper, for she made herself more charming than ever to the other men; yet presently, almost before Flood was aware of it, the others were gone, and she was saying:

“Well, Marshall? You always bring your little budget with you, don’t you? What is it now?”

“If you’re going to be nasty, Cecilia, I won’t tell you!”

Flood, who had not so far progressed as to become accustomed to such badinage, looked uneasily from Pendleton to their hostess; but Mrs. Maxwell seated herself beside him on the sofa, and calmly smiled.

Apparently she was going to ignore Pendleton for the moment. “I am always so glad when I can have my tea comfortably, without having to look after a roomful of people,” she said. “You don’t take it, I know, Mr. Flood, and Marshall can look

The LAND of CONTENT

out for himself. What do you think of this pink lustre cup, Mr. Flood? It's Rosamund's latest acquisition."

Flood had, after all, learned much in his three years. He bent forward to examine the cup, while Mrs. Maxwell turned its iridescent beauty towards the light.

"It is adorable," he said. "Is Miss Randall hunting for more to-day?"

Again his face had quickly become expressionless, but neither of the others were aware of it, and his question was doomed to remain unanswered.

Pendleton could no longer withhold his news. "Benny's just back from Virginia, Cecilia," he said. "He's bought Oakleigh."

"I think it's West Virginia, and it's just a little farm, you know," Flood said, weakly; but his geography was entirely immaterial to the others.

"Oakleigh? The Gore place?"

Flood still found it amazing that so many people knew so many other people; his lately made acquaintances in New York always seemed to know all about his lately made acquaintances in Florida or Virginia or the Berkshires, or, for that matter, in Europe. It was another of the things to which he had not yet become accustomed.

"And he wants you and me to help him fill it

The LAND *of* CONTENT

up with people," Pendleton went on, with the frankness for which he was famous.

Mrs. Maxwell looked quickly over her tea-cup at Flood, raising her eyebrows ever so slightly. For once Flood could not control his expression; his face flushed deeply as he leaned towards her.

"If you only would!" he begged. "I thought—I scarcely dared to hope—that perhaps if—if Miss Randall came along, too, you might consent to play hostess for a lone man?"

Cecilia was a practiced campaigner, as she had had need to be during the dreary years before she had Rosamund's money to count upon; instantly she recalled the place Flood could afford to call a "little farm," Oakleigh, white-pillared and stately, with its kennels and stables and conservatories. She could not imagine why he had chosen her unless it were thanks to Pendleton; yet, to be hostess of Oakleigh, even for a week or two, distinctly appealed to her. It would be possible enough, if she were to go as Rosamund's chaperon. Even Flood had seen that; and if it were left to her to fill its rooms with guests, how many debts might she not cancel! The opportunity was wonderful, a gift from Heaven; but could she count upon Rosamund? Would Rosamund go? There was a lack of complacency in Rosamund that her sister frequently found trying; she wondered how

The LAND of CONTENT

far she might dare to commit her to accepting Flood's invitation. Yet daring and Cecilia were not strangers, and the opportunity was unique.

"I am not sure of Rosamund's dates," she said.

Flood hesitated; but Pendleton, too, had been thinking about the splendor of Oakleigh.

"Oh, but Benny has no dates for Oakleigh yet!" he said. "So you may set your own time, Cecilia. Isn't that so, Benny?"

"If you only will," Flood besought her.

After all, Cecilia thought, there was nothing Rosamund could do, if she definitely promised for her!

"Then I think June will be quite perfect," she said, and said it none too soon; for the door was suddenly framing the vision of Flood's desire.

For an instant she seemed almost to sway in the doorway, as if she had come to the utmost limit of strength; she was paler than he had ever seen her, and, he thought, more lovely. He could never behold her without an immediate sense of abasement. Her beauty was of that indefinable sort which touches the heart and imagination rather than storms the senses. Men did not look upon her as at some beautiful creature on exhibition; always they looked, to be sure, but straightway the masculine appraisal of their gaze changed to the look one bestows upon

The LAND of CONTENT

some high and lovely thing. Her face had that fullness through the temples that Murillo loved; her eyes, hazel or brown or gray, changing in color with the responsive widening of the pupils, were rather far apart, deeply set, warm with interest when she looked directly at you; dark hair, ruddily brown, that broke into curl whenever a strand escaped, framed her face closely, and was always worn more simply than fashion demanded. She was tall enough to play a man's games well, and the impression that she gave was one of vigor and alertness, almost of impatience. This was the first time Flood had seen her tired.

And, as always when he saw her, it swept over him that she was, alone and above all others, the woman he wanted. She was beautiful, but it was not her beauty, not her social eminence, certainly not her wealth, nor anything that she might be said to represent, that constituted her appeal for him. There was that in her which he had not met elsewhere in his countrywomen, though frequently enough in France and England, a simplicity, a calmness, a dignity, which he interpreted as a consciousness that she needed no pretense, no further struggle or ambition to be other than just what she was. And what she was, was what he very much wanted. For him, she was the bright sum of all desire, the embodiment of everything rare and fine, which he now craved all

The LAND *of* CONTENT

the more because they had been denied him in his earlier years. Months before, since the first time he saw her, he had known that, and accepted it as an inspiration, as he had accepted and lived upon the fine flashes of imagination that had led him on to fortune in those western days, when imagination and courage had been his stock in trade; it was only the ultimate, and by far the most important, of those!

But Miss Randall was certainly unaware that she aroused in anyone in her drawing-room stronger feelings than the mild ones which usually accompany afternoon tea. After an instant's survey from the doorway, she came into the room, trying to smile through her fatigue.

"Mercy, Rosamund! You look like a ghost! Have you been walking yourself to death again?" her sister asked.

Flood's greeting was only a silent bow and a touch of her offered hand, but Pendleton was never speechless.

"I say, Rose," he cried, "Flood's just been inviting us all down to Virginia for June, and dear Cecilia has accepted! Can you stand the joy of having me to talk to for a whole month, Rosamund?"

At a quick spark in her sister's eyes, Cecilia bent towards her and spoke somewhat hastily. "Mr. Flood has bought Oakleigh, the Gore place. Isn't

The LAND of CONTENT

it nice of him to ask us down there, first of all?"

Although to her sister her look seemed to hold many things, to Flood's infatuated eyes the girl seemed suddenly more tired, harassed, or troubled; and with another of his flashes of intuition he would not give her a chance to reply. He began to tell them about his lone journey, talking very well, quite sure of his facts and with a large enthusiasm, and in spite of herself Rosamund became more and more interested. She even smiled a little at his account of the mountain doctor's old mare and her wisdom; she even found herself willing to hear more about the doctor!

"But, I assure you," Flood went on, "it wouldn't have taken anyone long to discover that he was not the usual country doctor. There is something about the man that would attract the attention of the world, if he lived on a pillar or were buried beneath the sands of Arizona. Personality, I suppose, unless you're willing to look the fact in the face and admit that a certain force emanates from greatness, wherever——"

"Oh, say!" Pendleton protested; and Flood laughed, rather shamefacedly, as a man laughs when he is discovered reading a learned book or quoting a classic.

But Miss Randall would not have that. "Please

The LAND *of* CONTENT

don't mind him, Mr. Flood; I want to hear the rest of it."

Again Flood was taken unawares, and his face flushed; but he went on to describe the evening before the doctor's fire, the four days he had remained, a willing guest, the drives about the mountains in the doctor's buggy—lest his own car should startle the shy mountain people.

"And since I've got back, I've been finding out about him. You know how it is—meet a chap you never heard of before, and straightway find out that a dozen people you know have known him for years.

"Last night I met Doctor Hiram Wilson in the club; he said it was the first time he'd had a chance to run in for months, yet he happened to be the first man I saw there. I was telling him something about this chap, and found he knew all about him. 'Keenest young investigator I ever knew,' he said, 'and came near working himself to death. How is he now?' He seemed mighty glad when I told him I could not have suspected that Ogilvie had ever been ill. Then he called Professor Grayson over, to repeat what I'd just told him; and I wish you could have seen old Grayson's face. He was delighted, but he could really tell more about Ogilvie than I could. It seems that Ogilvie was under him for a time, but had really gone far beyond him; then he made him-

The LAND of CONTENT

self ill by working day and night in his laboratory, and some of his medical friends packed him off to those mountains to get well. He was too far gone to protest, I guess; but before he was well enough to come back, he was so interested in the people there that he was willing to stay. Now the big fellows have fallen into the way of sending patients down to Bluemont, in the summer, to be near him; and he consults everywhere all over the country. They told me last night that his investigations and experiments on the nervous system would do more to save the vision than——”

But Miss Randall, at the word, exclaimed, and with parted lips and brightening eyes leaned towards him. Flood stopped, amazed.

“Vision! His work is for vision? For the eyes?” she cried.

“His experimental work. Of course, in the mountains——”

But Mrs. Maxwell was tired of Flood’s enthusiasm. “Dear me! She is going to tell him about Eleanor! Take pity on me, Marshall, and help me to escape!” she exclaimed, jumping up.

But her sister was far too deeply interested to be aware of their withdrawing towards the window. “Oh, Mr. Flood, is he really successful? Can he really help?”

The LAND of CONTENT

“I am told, and I believe, that he is a great man, Miss Randall. But surely——”

For the first time the weary look had left her face. “Mr. Flood, if you can help me! I have a friend, the dearest friend I have in the world, who believes she is going to be blind. I don’t believe it! I will not! And yet, it would not be remarkable—she has been through so much, so much! Oh, I cannot bear to think of it!”

Her hands were clasped on her knees, and she bent her head over them to hide the tears in her eyes.

“You have been with her this afternoon?” Flood surmised.

“We have spent the afternoon at an oculist’s,” she said. “I have begged her for weeks, for weeks, to let me take her—but she is so proud, oh, so foolishly proud—and to-day—to-day—Oh, it is unbearably cruel!”

She arose, and stood half turned from him, to hide her emotion, swaying a little; and intensely as he had wanted many things, Flood had never wanted anything so keenly as to comfort her—to comfort her by taking her in his arms, if he could, but above all, by any means, to comfort her. Hitherto it had seemed impossible, in his modesty, to make her realize his existence apart from the multitude; he welcomed this heaven-sent opportunity. Quite suddenly,

The LAND of CONTENT

in his need, he found his faith in Ogilvie increased a hundredfold; but he was too much concerned to perceive the humor of it.

“Oh, but—” he cried, “but I should never in the world accept one man’s opinion as final! And I assure you, Ogilvie is called in consultation by Blake, Wilson, Whitred. I should certainly have her see him!”

She seated herself again, wearily. “Ah, she is so proud! It is only when she sees I am fairly breaking my heart over her that she will let me do anything.”

“Then she is not—she has not——?”

“Oh, as for what she has and what she is, those are quite two different things, Mr. Flood! She is the dearest and loveliest and bravest creature in the world. She is more than I could possibly tell you. I have adored her ever since she was one of the big girls in the school where I was a tiny one. My father and mother were abroad, and Cecilia was up here in the North, with her father’s people, and then married; and I was left in Georgia at school, oh, such a lonely little mite! Eleanor was everything in the world to me—big sister, little mother, friend—everything! Then she married, and my father died abroad and dear Mamma took me over with her. Eleanor and I wrote to each other, and I was god-

The LAND of CONTENT

mother for her little boy; but Mamma and I were in France until—until Mamma died, three years ago; and it was only last year, when I came to live with Cecilia, that I found my Eleanor again.”

Unconsciously she was revealing to Flood more of her life than he had known before; he was afraid to interrupt by so much as a question. His face had again taken on the expressionless mask which so well covered his emotion or interest.

“I had never realized it, Mr. Flood; but all the while I was having everything, my precious Eleanor was poor, very poor. She had no relatives near enough to count, and her guardian sent her to school with what little money she had. I’m afraid it did not teach her very well how to support herself! She married the year she left school; she has never spoken of him at all, but I don’t believe her husband was—was all she had believed. When he died, she brought little Bob to New York.

“I heard dear old Mrs. Harley say, only a day or two ago, that there are thousands of Southern girls, dear, sweet girls who have never done any work at all, who come to New York every year to try to earn a living. Sometimes they think they can sing, sometimes they want to become artists, sometimes they just come; and Eleanor was one of them. Only, with her, it was worse, for she had Bob.

The LAND of CONTENT

"I don't know how they got along. I was in Europe, and she would only write when I had sent Bob something. I never dreamed that people, people of my own sort, my own friends even, might be—hungry, and not have money enough to buy anything to eat."

"You ought not to know it now," Flood said. But she only shook her head.

"I believe Eleanor has been hungry. And if you could only see her—she is so lovely, as lovely as a white lily!"

"Oh, but surely, Miss Randall, she could have got help! There are no end of places——"

"Yes. But a woman like Eleanor can't seek just any kind of help, you know, and—well, as darling Mrs. Harley says, charity doesn't help much, when it is only charity. Even from me, Eleanor says she cannot.

"When I came to New York to live with Cecilia, I went at once to see her. She let me do all I could for little Bob, but it was too late. He died. And now she will not let me do anything for her. I ask her what good my money is to me, if she will not let me use it as I want to! She would not even let me take her to an oculist until she saw that I was just breaking my heart over her! And now——"

Again her head was bent over her clasped hands;

The LAND of CONTENT

again she was too moved, for the moment, to speak. Flood seized his opportunity.

“Believe me, it can be arranged,” he said. “You have taken me into your confidence—you will let me—advise, won’t you?” She looked up eagerly, and he went quickly on. “See your friend, Mrs.—”

“Mrs. Reeves.”

“See your friend, Mrs. Reeves, and tell her about Ogilvie. Tell her that he is looking for someone—a lady—to help with his work down in those mountains. Prepare her to accept his offer. I will telegraph him.”

She looked at him blankly. “But—would it be true? I don’t think I understand!”

He smiled reassuringly. “It would not be true that I am going to Europe to-morrow—but we could make it true! If we get her away from the city, and near Ogilvie, we can leave everything else to him. He’s really a good deal of a man, you know.”

Rosamund sprang to her feet. “Cecilia,” she said, across the room, to her sister, “I am going back to Eleanor’s.”

III

IN her enthusiasm at the chance of finding a way out for Eleanor, Rosamund seemingly forgot that it was Flood who helped her. As a matter of fact, she considered him so little that she was quite willing to make use of his assistance in so good a cause and then to ignore him. She had always found someone at hand to help her in anything she wanted to do; she could not remember a time when there was not someone ready and willing to gratify her least whim. It was only in her efforts on Eleanor's behalf that she was baffled for the first time, as much by Eleanor's own pride as by not knowing to whom to turn, or where help was to be found. It was a new experience for her to find that her money could do nothing; for it was precisely her money that her cherished Eleanor refused. If she was to do anything, it must be by some other means.

Flood was not as entirely unconscious of her attitude as he appeared. He had no intention of pressing himself upon her through making himself of use. He beheld her suffering in sympathy with this unknown friend of hers, and her suffering so worked upon his love for her that he would have done much

The LAND *of* CONTENT

more to lessen it. But he knew humanity; and while he took more pleasure in being generous than in any other of the powers his wealth had brought him, he gave without thought of benefits returned, save in the satisfaction of giving.

His first move was a letter to the mountain doctor.

MY DEAR DR. OGILVIE: [he wrote] Since my visit with you a matter has been brought to my attention in which I do not hesitate to ask your assistance. Two ladies whom I hold in highest esteem are in great anxiety over a friend of theirs whom they have known from childhood. This friend is a widow who has lately lost her son, having come to New York from the South a few years ago in the hope of supporting herself and the child, and being now alone here except for the ladies who are my friends and hers. Her situation, you will perceive, is common enough; but what adds to the distress in this instance is that Mrs. Reeves' eyes are affected, to what extent I do not know. I have not had the pleasure of meeting the lady myself; but I am told that her vision is not entirely to be despaired of; and my friend Doctor Hiram Wilson has great confidence in your power. It would be impossible to offer charity to Mrs. Reeves; and it would be equally impossible for her to go to the Summit to be near you without assistance; indeed, it has been impossible for her to consult an oculist here until the entreaties of my friends pre-

The LAND of CONTENT

vailed upon her to do so with them. But it occurs to me that you might find use for an assistant in your work in the mountains—a capable lady who has suffered enough to have sympathy with the sufferings of others, and that sort of thing. Now would you be willing to lend yourself to a mild deception for the sake of conferring a great benefit? If you can make use of Mrs. Reeves' assistance, I shall be very glad to remit to you whatever remuneration you might offer her. I should also expect to pay the usual fees for your attention to Mrs. Reeves' eyes. You will know best how to take up that matter with her, so as not to arouse her suspicions of its having been suggested to you. I should suggest that you write to me, asking whether I can advise you of a suitable person to fill the office of—whatever is the medical equivalent of parochial assistant. I am sure I may count upon your help; as I understand it, this is one of those cases whose claim cannot be denied by any one of us.

A few days later Flood went to Miss Randall with Ogilvie's reply:

Curiously enough, I have the very place for Mrs. Reeves. One of my patients, who has taken a cottage at the Summit for the summer, is looking for a companion. I am writing her by this mail to apply through you to Mrs. Reeves. We will see what we can do for those troublesome eyes; but I can manage it better if I don't have the haunting feeling that I am to be paid—you will understand that. Your

The LAND of CONTENT

parochial assistant plan sounded very tempting, but that sort of thing would be too good to be true.

Flood laughed when Rosamund looked up from reading it. "My friend Ogilvie seems to be as shy of possible charity as your Mrs. Reeves," he said.

"What do you mean?" she asked. Then he remembered that she could not know what he had written.

She saw his hesitancy and laughed. "Oh! So you've been offering charity, have you? I wish you'd let me see a copy of your letter!"

"Now what for?" he asked. "Ogilvie's idea beats mine."

"But I'd like to see your literary style," she said, still laughing at him.

"Oh, please!" he protested.

"Well, I think you are very good, Mr. Flood. The rôle of rescuer of dames is very becoming to you! If you could see my Eleanor you'd feel repaid. She is the loveliest and the dearest——"

"But I haven't done anything at all, I assure you. I'm sure I hope your friend will find this Mrs. Hetherbee a comfortable person to live with."

"Mrs. Hetherbee! Is that Doctor Ogilvie's patient?"

Flood nodded. "She telephoned me before I'd

The LAND of CONTENT

had my breakfast for Mrs. Reeves' address. That was my excuse for bothering you in the morning."

"You *are* good," she said. Then she added, a little ruefully, "I wish you could help me to break the news to Eleanor!"

For to persuade her Eleanor, as she had foreseen, was not as easy as to persuade Flood and the unknown doctor and his patient.

She knew the lunch-room that Eleanor liked best, and sought her there at the noon hour. They chatted across the small intervening table, until Eleanor arose.

"You are not going back to the office," Rosamund declared, when they were together on the street. "Now, Eleanor, please don't be difficult!"

"My dearest child!" Mrs. Reeves began; but Rosamund took her friend's arm through her own, and poured forth the story of how she had heard, through a Mr. Flood, that Mrs. Hetherbee wanted a companion.

"Who is Mrs. Hetherbee?" Eleanor asked, suspiciously.

"I haven't the least idea," Rosamund frankly admitted. "But she wants a companion, and she is going to spend the summer at Bluemont Summit, and——"

She paused, and Eleanor turned to her. "Rose,

The LAND *of* CONTENT

tell it all!" she said. "You wouldn't be suggesting my leaving one situation for another, unless you——"

"No, I wouldn't! I know it! I confess! I am! But you are so peculiar, Eleanor!"

They laughed together, and Rosamund took courage to tell her. "There is a man there who, they say, does wonders for the eyes. That is why I want you to go, Eleanor. I don't know what Mrs. Hetherbee will pay you; and I will not offer to—to—I will not offer anything at all! But oh, Eleanor, please, please go!"

They walked in silence to the vestibule of the towering building where Eleanor worked. At the elevator she turned to Rosamund.

"I will go to see Mrs. Hetherbee to-night," she said. "And I do love you!"

Some weeks thereafter Rosamund came home from bidding Mrs. Reeves farewell at the station, to find Cecilia once more dispensing tea to Pendleton and Flood; and she sent Flood into a state of speechless happiness with her thanks. Eleanor had promised to see Doctor Ogilvie about her eyes at once, and Mrs. Hetherbee had taken a tremendous fancy to Eleanor, and it was good of Mr. Flood to have sent those lovely flowers to the train. Eleanor had introduced her as a friend of Mr. Benson Flood, and was he willing that she should shine in his reflected

The LAND *of* CONTENT

glory? Because it had tremendously impressed Mrs. Hetherbee!

When the men had left, Cecilia turned to her sister. "He's in love with you, you know!" she said.

"Nonsense! I've known him all my life, Cissy, and you don't fall in love with a person you've seen spanked!"

"You know very well I'm not talking about Marshall," said Mrs. Maxwell. "And you know very well that Mr. Flood is tremendously in love with you."

"I think you're disgusting," said Rosamund. "For heaven's sake, don't try to follow the fashion of the women of our set in that respect, Cissy! Every man they know has to be in love with somebody—half the time with somebody else's wife! Oh, I loathe it!"

Cecilia remained calm. "I hope you don't loathe Mr. Flood," she said, "because he is."

Rosamund threw herself back in a deep chair, and looked at her sister in the exasperation one feels towards the sweetly stubborn.

"Oh, very well! He is! But that's nothing to me!"

"Isn't it? He probably thinks it is! You've taken his help for your precious Eleanor, you know, and you're going to Oakleigh next month."

"I am not going to do anything of the kind!"

The LAND of CONTENT

That moved Cecilia. "But my dear child, you certainly are! He has asked me to be hostess for his first house-party, and I have accepted, and said you'd go with me."

"Cecilia!"

"Now don't say you've forgotten it! Why, it was the very day you told him about Eleanor."

Cecilia remained provokingly silent; and Rosamund jumped up impatiently, only to throw herself down upon another chair.

"Oh, I wish I had never seen the man!" she cried. "I did tell him about Eleanor, and I did let him do something for her. I would have taken help for Eleanor from anybody—from a street-sweeper, or the furnace man! That doesn't give your Mr. Flood any claim on me!"

"Yours, dear!" said Cecilia, smiling.

"He is not! Why, he is—nobody!"

"Well, that's not his fault. He wants to be somebody! He is doing his best to marry into our family, love!"

At that Rosamund had to laugh. "Oh, Cissy! Don't be such a goose! Mr. Flood is perfectly odious to me, and you know it. I don't see why you ever let Marshall introduce him! I don't see why you ever allowed him to so much as dare to invite us to Oakleigh!"

The LAND of CONTENT

“But, my dear, Oakleigh is—Oakleigh!”

“What if it is? He ought to have known better than to ask us there, and I don’t see why you accepted.”

Mrs. Maxwell smiled. “Pity, my dear!” she explained. “Pity—the crumb to a starving dog—the farthing to a beggar! Besides, he will let me invite whom I please and—well, Benson Flood may be a suppliant for one thing, Rose, but he has, after all, more money than he can count!”

“Then why don’t you marry him yourself?”

Mrs. Maxwell shrugged. “‘Nobody asked me, sir, she said!’ And besides, when poor dear Tommy died—oh, well, he did actually die, poor darling, so there never was any question of divorce or anything horrid, like that—you know how old-fashioned I am in my ideas, Rosamund! But still, there is such a thing as tempting Providence a little too often. My hopes are distinctly not matrimonial. Not that I think Mr. Flood is the least bit like Tommy. If I did, of course I couldn’t conscientiously—you know! As it is, I think he’d do very well—in the family!”

“You show great respect for the family!”

“Oh, well, Rosamund, the family can stand it! You must admit that! I am sure the Stanfields and the Berkleys and the Randalls need not mind a—a—

The LAND of CONTENT

an alliance with—with the millions of a Benson Flood!”

Rosamund sighed impatiently. “Oh, dear, Cecilia,” she said, “I do wish it were in my power to give you half my money!”

Mrs. Maxwell smiled with pursed lips. “So do I” she declared. “I’d take it in a minute! But you can’t! You can’t do one single thing with it until you’re twenty-five, except spend the income; and you’ve got six months more before your birthday. And even then you won’t want to give me half of it, because now you don’t even want me to spend the income! Gracious! I wish I had a chance at it!”

“I do give you half of my income, Cecilia!”

“No, you don’t,” Mrs. Maxwell contradicted, in a voice that echoed an old complaint. “You only give me half of the sum you think two people ought to spend! As if it isn’t right and one’s duty to spend all one can! I know there’s something about keeping money in circulation, and all that, if only I could remember it! But nothing would move you! Poor dear Mamma used to say that Colonel Randall was obstinate—*most* obstinate, Rosamund; and I must say that you don’t take after the Stanfields at all, not at all!”

Mrs. Maxwell’s grievances, thus expressed, be-

The LAND *of* CONTENT

gan to be too much for her; she spoke through tears. "I am sure I have tried to do my very best by you, Rosamund, since Mamma died! The accounts the Trust Company made me keep all those years were dreadful, perfectly dreadful! But I used to struggle through them somehow, because I was sustained by the thought that when you were twenty-five we could just spend and spend and spend and never have to bother about keeping accounts or being economical or *anything!* But it will be just the same then! I know it will! Why, you haven't even one automobile!"

Her sister's tears and the fatuity of her arguments were as unailing an appeal to Rosamund as they would have been to a man; she got up and put her arms around Cecilia.

"You silly old darling!" she laughed. "You shall have an automobile! You may have two if you want them, and I will give you every penny of my income that we haven't spent in the last three years! But for goodness sake, don't cry!"

Mrs. Maxwell followed up her victory. "Will you go to Oakleigh?" she asked.

Rosamund capitulated. "Oh, I suppose so!" she said, and shrugged. Then she added, with a somewhat malicious little smile, "It goes without saying that Marshall goes, too?"

The LAND of CONTENT

Mrs. Maxwell lifted her chin. The line of her throat was still very pretty. She smiled at her reflection in the mirror over the mantel.

“Don’t be absurd,” she said. “Why shouldn’t he?”

IV

THE Battlefield Hotel," Marshall Pendleton said, when the question of luncheon was brought up, "is a wonderful place, Benny; better take us there. Stopped there with the Willings last summer, and had eleven kinds of jam and about a hundred kinds of cake on the table at the same time. Great!"

"Heavens, Marshall!" Mrs. Maxwell exclaimed. "You know I can't eat sweets! I'd put on half a pound after such a meal as that!"

Pendleton grinned. "That was not all, Cecilia," he said. "I'd meant to keep it a secret, and surprise Benny with it. He's always out for gastronomic rarities. They give you cold cucumbers, cut thick, with warmish cream poured over them—real cream, lumpy, kind you used to have on grandfather's farm, and all that, you know! You feel green when you first see it. Then you wonder what it's like, but remember that your cousin somebody-or-other, the one you're not on speaking terms with, would inherit all you'd leave if you died. Then you begin to reason that other people must have dared and survived, and then you taste it and—consume! It's truly wonderful, Benny; better take us there!"

The LAND *of* CONTENT

"Are you inviting us to a suicide pact, Marshall?" Flood asked.

The others laughed, and Flood and Mrs. Maxwell exchanged memories of queer dishes while Pendleton pointed out to the chauffeur the intricate way through the narrow streets. Only Rosamund was silent, leaning back in the cushioned corner, looking abstractedly at the quaint doorways and gardens they passed. During the preceding fortnight, with Oakleigh crowded with guests, it had been easy enough to avoid Flood's companionship, which was beginning to make her more and more uneasy, in spite of his earnest effort to keep it for the present on the level of the commonplace. But, now that they were alone there, a party of four, and with Cecilia and Marshall in one of their intervals of mutual absorption, there was nothing to do but submit to the situation. She had welcomed Flood's suggestion of the day before that they should motor up to Bluemont; with Eleanor at the Summit, and with the others in the motor car, Flood's company could be endured for the day. So they had left Oakleigh early, and in Flood's big shining car swung down through the mountains, out upon the plain, and into the quaint little town of Battlesburg. Rosamund's imagination peopled again the streets and fields with soldiers in blue and gray. She knew where her father had

The LAND *of* CONTENT

fought and lain wounded. As they passed swiftly between the innumerable monuments her heart throbbed. From the vast field of graves the spirit of the past arose and spoke to her—spoke of the men who had fought and died there, spoke of the greater man who had led and forgiven.

But during all the journey she had been intensely bored; more, she was deeply provoked, and in that state of mind where everything jars and trifles loom as mountains. Pendleton's silly chatter seemed unendurable; she resented his nonsense almost as if it were an insult thrown at the sacredness of the battlefield. She hated his story of the cucumbers and cream. When the landlord told them they would have half an hour to wait before luncheon, she walked to the farthest end of the veranda, and stood, looking down the little narrow street. Mrs. Maxwell threw herself into a large yellow rocking chair, and Flood leaned against the veranda railing, facing her. Pendleton was entering their names in the office, and wonderingly inspecting the landlord's showcase of battlefield relics. Flood lighted a cigarette, and as he blew out the smoke, turned towards the end of the veranda where Rosamund stood. Cecilia watched his face for a moment or two; then she said:

“You must not be offended with Rosamund's ways, you know! She is not like anybody else.”

The LAND of CONTENT

Flood turned his head and smiled into her eyes. He waited a full half-minute before he replied. "No," he said, slowly. "No, she is not like anyone else!" He took several deep breaths of his cigarette, then spoke with little pauses between each phrase, as if he were thinking out what he had to say. "She's—she's a dream-woman come true! She's the lady of one's imagination!"

"Dear me!" Mrs. Maxwell remarked, with sisterly lack of enthusiasm. Flood threw back his head with a little laugh.

"I wonder which surprises you most," he said, "to hear that said of your sister, or to find out that I have an imagination?"

Mrs. Maxwell had had time to become an adept at begging the question. "Well," she said, "one doesn't usually associate imagination and—dream-women, you know, with your type. I mean, with business men!"

"Oh, pray don't mind saying 'my type'! It's good for me to hear it, because it is just there that I lose. I *am* of a different type—or class—from you and your sister; even from our friend Pendleton. Miss Randall sees that, and she will not try to look beyond it. She will not let herself know me better, because she doesn't want to; and she doesn't want to because I am not—I suppose she'd call it her 'sort.'"

The LAND *of* CONTENT

He spoke without a trace of bitterness, and smiled again at Mrs. Maxwell's well-executed manner of protest.

"Why, no one knows that better than I do," he went on. "She's five or six generations ahead of me in civilization, you know; her grandmother left off where my grand-daughter would have to begin. That's why I want her. I'm naturally impatient, and I want to see my wife doing and feeling and thinking a lot of things that are quite beyond my apprehension. She's just what I've always imagined a woman ought to be, and I want her."

"I don't think she'd credit you with any such imagination," Mrs. Maxwell said, adding, somewhat dryly, "with any imagination at all!"

"That is just my difficulty," Flood replied. "She will not give herself a chance to find me out." He smiled as he met her puzzled look. "You know—I am only stating the fact—I have—er—accumulated a great deal of money—a great deal, more than I know myself!"

Mrs. Maxwell's fingers curled a little more closely about the arms of her chair, and she nodded.

"Well, there are only two ways of doing that. There used to be three. There was a time when a man could accumulate a fortune by saving; but in this day and generation no accumulation of savings

The LAND of CONTENT

amounts to what we call a fortune. Nowadays a man can dig up a fortune; or he can so follow the daring of his imagination as to make a reality of what only existed, before, in his own ambitious dreams. I think it is safe to say that all but one per cent. of the great fortunes that are got together nowadays are done so by the exercising and ordering of a man's imagination. Well, I've made such use of mine that I'm a rich man, as far as money goes, at forty-three. Now my imagination is busy along new lines. Money is only the key: I want to enter the garden. I believe she'd realize every ideal I have! You are quite right. There's nobody like her!"

His face flushed deeply as he spoke, but Mrs. Maxwell was not looking at him. "Oh, dear," she sighed, "I do wish she were not quite so—odd!"

"Not odd," Flood contradicted, though pleasantly enough, "but supreme!"

Mrs. Maxwell's eyebrows went up. Ordinarily she was too conscious of what might be expected of her breeding to be disloyal to her sister; but Cecilia was not an angel.

"She is supremely full of notions," she remarked. "How any girl with her money can prefer—actually prefer—to dress as she does, and to live as she does, and to go about with one maid between us—I cannot understand it! She doesn't spend a thousand a

The LAND of CONTENT

year on her clothes, and she doesn't own so much as one motor car! You may call that sort of thing supreme; I call it odd!"

Pendleton had come out and joined Rosamund. They were obviously unaware of Flood's gaze, but Mrs. Maxwell rather disdainfully noticed that his look had softened as she spoke.

"Yes," he said, "that is unusual, as far as my experience goes; but I rather think she is quite capable of doing the unexpected. That's another part of her charm for me. I can only guess at what she would do or think, you know. And she's so far beyond me that while money is almost the whole show to me, it doesn't count at all, with her! Jove! I wish she might have the spending of mine!"

Mrs. Maxwell fairly shivered at the thought of Flood's millions going to waste, as she expressed it to herself; but fortunately for her peace of mind luncheon was announced, and they went into the little Dutch dining-room to investigate the cucumbers and cream.

At the table Rosamund lost some of her pensiveness; and when they came out again to the sight of the fields where the armies had fought and died, and were once more in the car, she bent towards Flood with eyes burning with excitement, lips parted and hands clasped.

The LAND of CONTENT

"Oh," she cried, "I am glad, so glad I came, Mr. Flood! It is going to be a wonderful afternoon! I am thrilling even now! The suffering and the sacrifice and the glory! They have left their marks everywhere, haven't they?"

Flood looked at her with admiration so engrossing as to make him scarcely aware of what she said; Pendleton was discussing roads with the chauffeur, but Mrs. Maxwell turned in her seat.

"What on earth are you talking about, Rosamund?" she demanded.

"The battlefield!" the girl explained. "The field and the marking stones, the orchard where Father was wounded—all, all of it! I am going over it bit by bit, every inch of it, and I'm going to thrill, thrill, thrill! Probably cry, too!" she added. "I hope you brought your vanity-box along, Cecilia!"

"But, my dear child, we are going to the Summit! We are going to see Eleanor!"

For once Cecilia welcomed the thought of Eleanor, but Rosamund only laughed.

"Mr. Flood will bring us another day to see Eleanor," she said, "won't you, Mr. Flood? Today, Cissy darling, I am going to see Battlesburg—just as if I were a tourist!"

Mrs. Maxwell looked at her in amazement.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

“Rosamund!” she cried. “Mr. Flood! Marshall! Marshall! Please! Mr. Flood, you certainly did not bring us on this trip to go sight-seeing, did you? Marshall, did you ever hear anything so absurd? Rosamund wants to go paddling about in this—this graveyard!”

Rosamund was unabashed. “Yes, of course I do!” she said. “So do you, don’t you, Mr. Flood? And, Marshall, you know you’ve wanted to fight a battle over again ever since the last one we had at my ninth birthday party, when I pulled your hair and you were too polite to smack me!”

“I never wanted to fight in all my life, Rosamund,” Pendleton drawled. “Certainly not on a day like this, and after a Dutch midday dinner.”

Flood was embarrassed, and looked it; but Mrs. Maxwell gave him no chance to reply. “Rosamund, I hate to speak so plainly,” she said, “but there are times when you go too far with your absurdities. Nobody goes sight-seeing; we are Mr. Flood’s guests, and we have miles of steep road to get over this afternoon; you cannot upset his plans in this way. Besides, it’s altogether too warm for exertion—and emotion. You’ll have to get your thrills in some less strenuous way. I simply refuse to be dragged over any battlefield in existence.”

Mrs. Maxwell sank back in her corner, and reso-

The LAND of CONTENT

lutely looked away; Rosamund, still smiling, turned towards Flood.

"We'll leave her in the car to amuse Marshall, and we'll take one of those funny little carriages, won't we, Mr. Flood?"

Her smile and little air of confidence brought color to Flood's face; he opened and closed his hands nervously. His boasted imagination failed him. The lady of his dreams was doing the unexpected. His voice showed his perplexity.

"My dear Miss Randall, I'd do anything in the world to please you! There are some miles of mountain roads to be gone over, if we are to get back to-night, but"—he leaned towards her—"when you ask me, you know I could not refuse you anything in the world, even at the risk of Mrs. Maxwell's displeasure!"

His words and manner instantly accomplished all that Cecilia's insistence had failed to do. Immediately Rosamund's face lost its bright eagerness for the same indifferent coldness that she usually showed him.

"Oh, by all means, let us remember the mountain roads, Mr. Flood," she said, leaning back upon the yielding cushion, turning her head to look listlessly out of the car.

"Oh, please!" poor Flood exclaimed.

The LAND of CONTENT

Cecilia began to chatter gaily, and Marshall bent over his road maps. The car flew out of the town, noiselessly except for the faint humming of its swift onrush, the modern song of the road. But, to Rosamund, there was no melody in the song; she was out of tune with the day, with her companions, with the ride itself.

V

PERHAPS, if the events of the next few hours had come to pass at any other time, they would not have left the same mark upon her life. As it was, Rosamund had come to that state of moral restlessness which is bound either to open the windows of the soul to fresher air and wider fields of vision, or else to induce the peevish discontent which so often falls to the lot of the idle woman. Although she consciously longed for happiness, she knew that she was not sentimentally unhappy; neither was she fatuously so, like her sister. Cecilia was only one of many women of her age and class, who imagine that possession brings enjoyment. She often declared that if she had as much as her acquaintances she could make herself content, but that if she had more than they she could be supremely happy. Rosamund had no such illusions; her clear mind had never been perverted to the futility of such ambitions, although there was nothing in her environment to suggest a satisfying substitute for them. If she was restless, it was not for something she might not have. It pleased her pride to think that she valued neither wealth nor social eminence, but accepted them only as her birth-

The LAND of CONTENT

right; but, as in the case of the infatuated Flood, she resented any sign of invasion upon the sacred precincts which for generations had respected their Berkleys and their Stanfields and Randalls. It was her pride which had induced her to neglect, as unimportant, the things Cecilia yearned for; Rosamund Randall was to be above manifestations of wealth—although Rosamund Randall was not above occasional haughty stubbornness.

The charitable pastimes in which some of her friends indulged held no appeal for her; she was too impatient for immediate results to be successful in them. She vaguely felt that some fault must lie with the unfortunate, and she could not imagine that the individual might be interesting. Even Eleanor's experience, although it had stirred her heart to pity, brought her no closer to the mass of suffering. She had no particular talents, no pet enthusiasms; yet her intelligence was too keen to be satisfied with the round of days that constituted life for Cecilia, as well as for most of their friends. Nothing suggested itself as a substitute for them, and to-day not even the charms of nature satisfied her, however beautiful the country through which the big car carried them. But insensibly it made its effect upon her. Away from the scars of battle, through orchard and grass-land, between fields of ripening corn and pastures where

The LAND *of* CONTENT

drowsy cattle were ruminating in shady fence-corners; past little white farmhouses with red barns at their backs, and tangled gardens where bees feasted in front of them; up towards the hills, through stretches of cool woodland, where little spring-fed brooklets crossed the road, and where the turns were so narrow that the call of the horn had often to pierce the stillness; out again upon cleared spaces, and at last far up on the mountain-tops—so they traveled, Rosamund alone seeming to notice the beauties they passed so swiftly.

Cecilia kept up an easy chatter with the two men. Flood seemingly had eyes for the older woman only, yet he was keenly aware of the girl beside him. All the way he was inwardly cursing himself for the ill-timed compliment which had silenced her, and he was too good a judge of human nature to follow his first mistake with a second. If Rosamund wished to be silent, no interruption to her reverie should come from him, at least. As there was only the one way across the mountains, Pendleton had put away his road map and was leaning sideways over the back of the seat, facing Cecilia and Flood; the three found plenty to talk about, and ignored Rosamund's pensive withdrawal.

For miles they had passed no living thing; even the birds and woodland creatures seemed to have gone

The LAND of CONTENT

to sleep; and the chauffeur, taking them along at second speed, believed it unnecessary to sound his horn at every winding of the road.

Then, so suddenly that no one knew just what had happened, there was a shriek from somewhere, a wild cry from the man at the wheel, a stopping of the car so quickly as to throw the women forward and Flood to his knees. Pendleton, facing back, was the only one who could see the road behind them; with a cry that was either oath or prayer, he leaped from the car and ran back, the chauffeur scarcely four yards behind him. Flood scrambled up and Rosamund sprang to her feet. Cecilia covered her ears with her hands, and was the only one who could voice her horror.

“We have killed someone!” she cried wildly, crouching down to shut out sight as well as sound. “We have killed someone! Oh, what shall we do? What shall we do? I cannot see it—I cannot stand the sight of it!”

But no one heeded her outcry. Flood had opened the door and was speeding after the others; and Rosamund, too, as quickly as her trembling would allow her, ran towards the little group at the roadside.

When she reached them, they were bending over two forms—a boy and a young girl. The boy had

The LAND of CONTENT

been struck by the step of the car, and lay huddled where its force had thrown him; the girl lay beside him, her face down in the weeds and grass. Pendleton and the chauffeur, with ghastly faces, were feeling for her heart. As Rosamund came up they turned her upon her back. Rosamund tore off her gloves, and pressed her hand against the girl's throat.

"I think she has only fainted," she said. "Get a cold thermos bottle, someone!"

The chauffeur ran to do her bidding, but before he got back the girl had opened her eyes. Rosamund bent closer.

"Are you hurt?" she asked. "Did we hit you? Can you speak to me?" But the girl could not answer at first; then the iced water and something from Flood's pocket flask revived her, and she sat up, leaning against Rosamund.

"Gee!" she said. "I was scared! What d'yer think of an automobile up here! Where's Tim?"

The men had left the girl to Rosamund, and were kneeling by the child; Rosamund glanced over her shoulder at them. "I'm afraid he is hurt," she said. "Do you think you can take care of yourself for a moment while I see? I wouldn't try to stand up quite yet, if I were you."

"Oh, sure," the girl replied. "They ain't anything the matter with me. You go right on."

The LAND *of* CONTENT

But all of Rosamund's ministrations failed of any response from the boy. Flood's varied experience had given him a passing acquaintance with broken bones, but he could find none in the little limbs that were thin to emaciation; his search revealed only a few scratches on the child's face, and a cut on his head. At last he looked across the little form at Rosamund.

"I'm afraid there's concussion," he said. "We shall have to take him to a doctor."

The girl had risen, and was standing, with arms akimbo, looking down at them. "Doctor Ogilvie," she said at once. "He's the one. He's right over at the Summit."

Flood looked quickly at Rosamund. "Ogilvie! I had no idea his territory extended this far!" Then he turned to the girl. "So you know Doctor Ogilvie? How far are we from the Summit?"

"Gee! I dunno! It's awful far to walk it, I know that!"

Rosamund looked up with troubled eyes. "There must be some house near by," she said, "where we could take him. I don't believe he ought to be carried very far. Do you live near here?" she asked the girl.

"Laws, no! We live in the city, him an' me. We ain't any kin, y'understand; he's a tubercler, an'

The LAND *of* CONTENT

my eyes give out, and we're just visitin' Mother Cary."

Flood was becoming impatient. "Well, where does the Cary woman live?" he demanded. "We don't need your family history, my girl."

Instantly the girl's black eyes flashed, and her chin went up. "Well, an' you ain't goin' to get it, my man!" she returned. "I know the likes of you; seen you by the million!"

She glared up at him belligerently, but Rosamund laid her hand on her shoulder. "Don't," she said quietly. "Where is this place where you're staying?"

"It's just back of the woods there. The road's on up a piece, about two squares; yer can't miss it, 'cause it's the only one there is."

So they lifted the child, and laid him carefully on the broad back seat. They decided that Mrs. Maxwell and Pendleton should wait beside the road, while Rosamund and Flood saw to the boy's safety, and the girl rode with the chauffeur to point the way. She seemed but little impressed by the accident, and greatly pleased at the motor ride.

"Laws, but I wish the girls at the factory could see Yetta Weise settin' up here," she remarked as she took her place.

As she had told them, the house was not far; and

The LAND of CONTENT

notwithstanding her anxiety for the injured boy, Rosamund looked at it in amazement, so unlike was it to anything she had ever seen, so quaintly pretty, so tidy, so homelike.

It stood on the hillside, a few yards back from the road. From a little red gate set in the middle of the whitest of tiny fences a narrow brick path led straight to the front door. The upper story of the house overhung the lower, making a shady space beneath that was paved with bricks and made cheery and comfortable with wooden benches piled with crocks and bright tin milk pans set out to air; and all about the little white farm-buildings wound narrow brick paths bordered with flowers—geraniums, nasturtiums, pansies, with, here and there, groups of house plants in tin cans and earthen pots, set outside for their summer holiday. Unaccustomed though she was to such ingenuous simplicity of decoration, Rosamund could not but recognize it as a haven of peace, a little home where love and time had impressed their indelible marks of beauty.

The big car drew up to the gate very gently; Yetta called, loudly and shrilly; Flood lifted the boy and carried him towards the house, and Rosamund followed; but halfway up the path she paused, half in amazement, half in repulsion.

Yetta's call had brought to the doorway the

The LAND of CONTENT

strangest of small creatures—a tiny, bent old woman. She braced herself on one side against the doorway, on the other with a queer little crutch with padded top, held by a strap across her shoulder; as she came forward to meet them she moved the crutch, like some strange crab, obliquely, grotesquely, yet with the adeptness of the life-long cripple. She was evidently startled, even frightened; but when her eyes met Rosamund's she smiled. At once the girl's feeling of repulsion vanished, for on the tiny old face there was none of the suffering and regret that so often mark the deformed. It was not drawn or heavy; plain and homely though it was, it was made radiant by a world-embracing mother-love, transfigured by that quality of tenderness and sweetness that Rosamund had learned to associate with pictured mediæval saints and martyrs. With Mother Cary's first smile, something entered the girl's consciousness which never again left it.

The old woman paid no attention to Yetta's voluble explanations, nor wasted any time on questions.

"Take him into the room on the left and lay him on the sofy," she directed, and hobbled along behind the little procession; but when they had lain the still unconscious child in the shaded best room, she looked from Flood to Rosamund for explanation, with a dignity which could not fail to impress them.

The LAND of CONTENT

“ Maybe he’s just been knocked senseless,” she said, when they had told her all they could. “ But anyways, we ought to have Doctor Ogilvie here’s soon as ever we can. If the young lady’ll help me undress the little feller, you can take Yetta, sir, to show you the way.”

Flood hesitated; to undress the child would be a strange task for Rosamund. “ Can’t I do that before we go? ” he asked.

But the old woman had no such hesitation. “ No, you can’t,” she said, “ an’ I wish you’d hurry. Timmy ain’t strong, anyway.”

So, with a troubled look, Flood followed Yetta, and in a moment Rosamund heard the purr of the motor as the car sped off towards the Summit; then, as she afterwards remembered with surprise and wonder, she found herself obeying the old woman’s directions.

“ Now, honey, you jest lift the little feller right up in your arms, bein’ careful of his head; he don’t weigh no more’n a picked chicken. We’ll get him to bed time the doctor gets here, an’ have some water b’ilin’ an’ some ice brought in, case he wants either one. Here, right in here—my house is mostly all on one floor, so’s I can manage to scramble around in it when Pap’s in the fields. That’s the way—no, he won’t need a pillar. I’ll take off his little clo’es whilst

The LAND of CONTENT

you lift him—that's right. My! Think o' that gentleman wantin' to do for him—as if any woman with a heart in her body could let a man handle sech a little thing's this! But he didn't know, did he, honey?"

And strangely enough Rosamund was conscious of a wave of tenderness towards the pathetic little figure, limp and emaciated; long afterwards she realized that people always did and felt what Mother Cary expected them to. She even bathed the little dusty feet, while the old woman hobbled about to bring her different things, talking all the while.

"Pore little soul, seems like he had enough without this—not but what I reckon he'll come out o' this a heap sight easier than he will the other. Not a soul on the top o' the yearth to belong to, he hasn't; sent here to fatten up an' live out o' doors, 'count o' being a tubercler. No, honey, he ain't nothin' to Pap an' me 'ceptin' jest one o' the pore little lambs that have a right to any spare love an' shelter an' cuddlin' that's layin' around the world waitin' for sech as him. I used to wonder why the Lord let sech pore little things stay in the world, until I found out how much good they do to folks that look after 'em. Land! I wouldn't be without one of 'em on my hands now, not for more'n I can say. What? Oh, yes, dearie, I take one or more of 'em and build 'em up an' get 'em well, with Doctor Ogilvie's tellin' me how; an' when they

The LAND of CONTENT

go back to the city all well again, I jest take one or two more. Pap an' me wouldn't know what to do now, ef we didn't have some pore little thing to look after. I'm jest that selfish, I begrudge everybody else that has a bigger house the room they got for more of 'em."

When the child had been made clean and cool, and the old woman had shown Rosamund how to draw in the blinds and leave the room in pleasant shadow, she led the way out to the paved place in front of the house.

"You look all tuckered out, honey," she said, when Rosamund had sunk wearily into a rush-seated armchair, "an' I'm goin' to get you some fresh milk."

So for a few minutes the girl was alone, with time to think over the crowding events of the past half hour, which seemed almost like a day. One emotion had come closely upon another, and now she was in this strange little harbor where, apparently, only kind winds blew, the storms of the world outside, a harbor where weak vessels found repair, where passers-by were welcomed and supplied with strength to go on. Subconsciously she wondered whether it might not be the harbor of a new, fair land, herself the storm-buffed traveler about to find shelter. Then, more in weariness of spirit than in bodily fatigue, she drew

The LAND *of* CONTENT

the long hatpin from her hat and tossed it aside, leaning her head back against the stone of the house, and closed her eyes.

When Mother Cary returned with a glass of creamy milk, she noted the girl's pallor, the shadows her long lashes cast on her white cheeks.

"I wouldn't feel too bad about it," she said. "The little feller can't be hurt very bad, and I reckon it was jest bein' so scared an' so weak, anyway, that made him go off in his head like that."

Rosamund could not confess that her thoughts had been of herself rather than upon the injured child. "Do you think he will recover?" she asked.

"Well, what Doctor Ogilvie can't do ain't to be done, I know that much," Mother Cary replied. "Folks do say it's an ill wind blows nobody any good, an' it cert'n'y was his ill wind blew *us* good; 'cause if he hadn't been that sick he couldn't live in the city, he never would 'a' come to the mountings, an' I'm sure I don't see how we ever did get along without him. Why, he's that good a doctor folks still come up here from the city to see him; and many's the one stays at the Summit just to be where he can look after them; and Widder Speers that he lives with told me that doctors from 'way off send for him to talk over sick people with them—jest to ask him what to do, like. Oh, Doctor Ogilvie can do anything anybody can!"

The LAND of CONTENT

Rosamund was amused, in spite of herself, at the old woman's naïveté. "He was sick, then, when he came?" she asked, idly.

"Yes, but you'd never 'a' known it," Mother Cary told her. "Land! How he did get about from place to place, huntin' out other folks that was ailin'! He hadn't been up here more'n a month before he knew every soul in these mountings, which is more'n I do, though I've lived here forty year an' more. He jest took right a holt, as you might say. That's how come I begun to take care of these pore little helpless city things.

"First time he come here, he looked all about the place when he was leavin', an' he says to Pap, 'Plenty o' good room an' good air you got here, an' I guess there's plenty o' good food, too, ain't there?' Pap, he says, 'Well, we manage to make out, when the ol' lady feels like cookin'!' An' the doctor laughs an' says to me, 'Ain't got quite as much to do as ye had when that son an' daughter o' yours were home here, have ye? Don't ye miss 'em?' At that the tears jest come to my eyes, like they always do whenever I think o' my own child'en bein' two or three miles away from me on farms o' their own; an' the doctor he smiles an' says, 'Well, I'm goin' to supply your want,' he says.

"Pap an' me never thought 'ny more about it

The LAND of CONTENT

tell a week or so later when we see him drive up behind that old white horse o' his with the puniest little boy alongside o' him ever I set my two eyes on. 'Here's something to keep you from bein' lonesome, Mis' Cary,' he says; an' ever since then, it bein' goin' on five year, I've had one or another o' them pore little—land! There he comes now, without a sign of a hat on his red head! Ef he ain't that forgetful!"

Flood's big car had whirled rapidly into sight along the woodland road, and before it stopped the doctor was out and into the house. When Mother Cary hobbled in, Rosamund remaining to say a word or two to Flood, the doctor was already bending over the injured child.

Cecilia was waving a frantic hand from the car, and Rosamund and Flood walked down the little path to the red gate.

"Where is your hat?" was the first thing Mrs. Maxwell asked Rosamund. "Do get in! We've miles and miles to go, and we've wasted hours! I'm sure I don't see why they couldn't have sent for the doctor in the ordinary way; why, the road back there was something terrible!"

Rosamund was conscious of an absurd longing to slap or pinch Cecilia; she was really too vapid for polite endurance.

The LAND of CONTENT

"We can't possibly leave until we know how badly hurt the child is," she said, and deliberately turned and walked back into the cottage.

After a moment or two Flood followed her, leaving Cecilia to pour out her indignation upon Pendleton.

The doctor was just coming out of the little bedroom, and nodded to them both in a general way. Rosamund looked at him curiously. She noted with some amusement that his hair was, as Mother Cary had somewhat more than suggested, frankly red; not even the best-intentioned politeness could have called it sandy. He was of average height, with keen eyes which looked black, although she afterwards knew them to be gray; his breadth of shoulder made him seem less tall than he was, and his frame was rather lightly covered, although his very evident restless energy seemed more responsible for it than any evidence of ill-health.

"Must have jabbed his ribs," he said, looking at Flood with a half smile, and seemingly ignoring the presence of this girl from his old familiar world. "Cracked a couple of them, but they're soon mended in a kiddie. Only thing now is this slight concussion; needs careful nursing for a few days."

Then he turned, looked squarely into Rosamund's face, and issued his orders in precisely the manner of

The LAND of CONTENT

a doctor to a nurse, without a trace of hesitation, apparently without a shadow of doubt that she would obey.

“Keep ice on his head, you know, and watch him every minute through the night. He’s not likely to move; but if he should become conscious——” He continued his directions carefully, explicitly, all the while looking at Rosamund intently, as if to impress them upon her.

While he was speaking, Flood’s face flushed darkly. With the doctor’s last phrase, “Only be sure to watch him every minute,” he spoke sharply. “You are making a mistake, Doctor Ogilvie,” he said. “Miss Randall is not a nurse.”

The doctor instantly replied, “I know she isn’t, but we’ll have to do the best we can with her!”

Flood’s face grew redder still; Rosamund smiled a little. “Miss Randall cannot possibly stay here,” Flood said. “That is entirely out of the question. I am willing to do all I can for the child, and I am very glad he is not seriously hurt, although the accident was, I think, unavoidable. I will send a nurse to-morrow—two, if you want them. But you will have to get along with the help here for to-night.”

“Haven’t any,” said the doctor, briefly. “Yetta’s a child, and Mother Cary goes down to her daughter’s where there’s a new baby.”

The LAND of CONTENT

For a moment no one spoke. Mother Cary was smiling at Rosamund, and her look drew the girl's from the two men. Then her smile answered the old woman's.

In a flash of inspiration she knew that she had found an answer to her questions of the earlier hours; something in her heart drew her symbolically toward the little silent, helpless child in the darkened room behind her; some mother-feeling as new and wonderful as the dawn of life. Both Flood and the doctor remembered, through all their lives, the look of exaltation on her face when she spoke.

"I will stay," she said, quietly, and walked into the darkened room.

VI

DURING the long silent watches of that night there came to Rosamund one of those revelations, fortunately not rare in human experience, by means of which the soul is taught some measure of the power of the infinite—power to change or to create, to lead, to see more clearly, or better to understand. The afternoon had been crowded with new impressions and emotions following each other so swiftly as to preclude consideration of them, but during the hours beside the unconscious child her mind was busy; one thing after another came back to her, and, reviewed in comparison with all the other happenings of the day, took its rightful place of importance or unimportance.

After the car had borne away her irate sister and friends, the red-headed doctor carefully went over his directions to her, and she had some difficulty in ignoring the twinkle in his eyes; Cecilia's horror and Flood's disgust had been as amusing as Pendleton's lazy irony. But before supper the doctor, too, had hurried away. Flood had not offered him a lift, and the walk back to the Summit was long. Father Cary, whom she found to be a friendly giant with a well-

The LAND of CONTENT

developed rustic sense of humor, had driven off with his tiny wife down the mountain to their daughter's home, leaving Yetta to clear away the supper.

Until then the black eyes of that other daughter of cities had scarcely left Rosamund. As soon as she had washed and put away the dishes, she came to the door of the room where the little boy lay, and after asking if 'the lady' were afraid of the quiet and dark, she went upstairs.

Then Rosamund stood at the window and watched the stars come out. The great boles of the oaks and chestnuts in the strip of woods across the way drew about themselves mantles of shadow. An apple fell from a tree near the low, white spring-house, and a cricket began to chirp. From some lower mountain slope there sounded the faint tinkle of a cow bell, and still farther down the valley twinkling lights marked, in the darkness, the places where people were gathered—little beacons of home; and she knew that overhead there shone another light, set in a window by the old woman before she went down the mountain. The placing of that light in the window, Mother Cary had told her, was the uninterrupted custom of the house since her first child was born. On that day of wonder, when the shadows had deepened in the quiet room where the miracle had taken place, they had set a lamp on the window sill, and a light



“One thing after another came back to her.”

PROPERTY
OF THE
NEW-YORK
SOCIETY LIBRARY

The LAND of CONTENT

had burned in the same window every night since then, a signal to all who should see it that happiness had come to live on the mountain, and still dwelt there. It was so small a light that, even when dark closed in, the girl standing beneath it could scarcely discern its rays; yet she knew that it was large enough to be seen far off, miles down the valley, across on the other mountains. Flood had told her of seeing it from Doctor Ogilvie's house at the Summit. She felt its symbolism—so small and humble a light, shedding its rays and carrying its message so far; and with that thought there came another.

This humble life of love and service, how beautiful it was! Only that morning she had believed her life the real one, her world the only one worth living in; but already she was beginning to suspect that there might be a life more real, a world less circumscribed. She looked back into the little bedroom, and beyond into the dimly lighted kitchen; it was so poor a house, so rich a home!

And of their poverty these mountain folk had given immeasurable largesse to how many waifs—dust of the city's greed and sin, taken them into this loving shelter, tended them back to usefulness, taught them cleanliness of heart and body. Yet even to the waif so rescued the city's power of harm reached out! How strange it was that the boy lying there should

The LAND of CONTENT

have escaped so many of the city's dangers, found this safe refuge on the mountain, and then have been injured on a quiet country road by one of those very dangers he had dodged every day since he first toddled across city streets!

As she watched the child, another thought presented itself, caused her cheeks to burn in the dark, sent a wave of disgust and shame over her: these people, who had added nothing to the city's harm, recognized their responsibility to the city's offspring; whereas Flood and Pendleton, her sister and herself, who fed upon the city and its workers, would almost have left the boy by the roadside, but for very shame of one another. Her friends believed her whimsical, unreasonable, utterly foolish to watch beside him through one night; and she had been, in her inmost heart, taking credit to herself for doing so!

She asked herself whether, indeed, she would have remained, if it had not been for the compelling force of Ogilvie, no less insistent for being unvoiced. She recalled what Flood had told her about him; yet, now that she had met him, all of Flood's enthusiasm did not seem to explain the man, and she smiled as she remembered how little of that enthusiasm poor Flood had shown in his disgust at Ogilvie's quiet demand for her assistance. She felt suddenly ashamed as she admitted to herself her secret delight in teas-

The LAND *of* CONTENT

ing Flood and Cecilia and Marshall by obeying the doctor's appeal. In her growing humility she was almost ready to believe that there had been no impulse of good in her remaining. Yet she knew that she would have had to remain, even if the others had not been there. What manner of man, she wondered, was this red-headed country doctor who had first aroused the admiration of a man like Benson Flood, and now had forced Rosamund Randall to perform a service that, a day before, she would have thought a menial one? Certainly he must differ in many respects from the men she had hitherto met.

The loudly ticking clock on the kitchen mantel struck off hour after hour. A lusty cock began calling his fellows long before the fading of the stars. Rosamund, standing again at the breast-high casement of the little window, for the first time in her life watched the day break. Rosy fingers of light reached up from the eastern mountains; valley and hillsides threw off their purple and silver wrappings of night, and gradually took on their natural colors; little fitful gusts of air, sweet with night-drawn fragrance, touched her face at the window; from their nests in the near-by fruit-trees faint, sleepy twitterings soon increased to a joyful chorus of bird music; the shadows melted, it was day, and the world awoke; but it was a new world to Rosamund. She

The LAND of CONTENT

had touched the pulse of life, and with the dawn there was born in her heart a purpose, feeble and immature as yet, but as surely purpose as the newborn babe is man.

Father Cary came up the mountain early to attend to his cattle, bringing word that his daughter was not so well, and that Mother Cary could not leave her until later in the day, but that Miss Randall was to feel at home, and Yetta was to do all she could for her comfort. He had made breakfast ready by the time Rosamund came into the kitchen; and presently Yetta stumbled down the stairs, yawning and sleepy-eyed.

"Gee!" she said, by way of morning greeting, "if this place ain't the limit for sleep! When I first come up here I jist had to set up in bed an' listen to the quiet; kept me awake all night, it did. Now I want to sleep all day an' all night, too! Ain't it the limit?"

"But that's the best thing in the world for you," Rosamund said, and smiled at her. The girl must have divined a difference in the smile, for she beamed cheerfully back.

"That's what Doctor Ogilvie says," she replied. "All's the matter with me is m'eyes. Y'see I been sewin' ever since I's about as big as a peanut; first I sewed on buttons to help my mother, an' then I sewed

The LAND *of* CONTENT

beads. There was my mother an' me an' m'father, on'y he wasn't ever there; an' we had four boarders. Course the boarders had to set next to the light, an' I couldn't see very well. Then after my mother died, I sewed collars day-times and beads at night, till I got the job in the shirt-waist shop. Tha's where m'eyes got inspected—they don't never inspect you till you get a good job. It don't do me no good to know my eyes is bad; I could a told 'em that m'self—only thing is, that was the reason they sent me up here, so I've that much to thank 'em for, I guess. Still, I——”

But Father Cary interrupted the stream of chatter. “Now look a here,” he said, “supposin' you do less talkin' an' more eatin'! Two glasses of milk, two dishes o' oatmeal, and two eggs is what you got to get away with before you get up from this table.”

But Yetta's tongue was irrepressible. “You watch me!” she replied, and grinned at him, her black eyes sparkling. “That's another funny thing about the country,” she informed Rosamund, nodding. It was evident that she believed Miss Randall to be as much a stranger to the country as she herself had been. “In the city all you want to eat in the mornin' is a bite o' bread an' some tea; nobody ever heard o' eatin' eggs in the mornin', nor oatmeal any other time; but here—Gee! I can stow away

The LAND of CONTENT

eggs while the band plays on, an' tea ain't in it with milk—this yere kind o' milk! ”

Rosamund's strained ear caught a faint rustle from the inner room; she sprang up, followed closely by the others; the child had moved his head, and his eyes were closed; before that they had been ever so slightly open. Rosamund laid her hand upon his forehead, bent down so that his breath fanned her soft cheek. Then she looked up at Father Cary.

“ I believe he is really sleeping, not unconscious,” she whispered. “I think we must keep very, very quiet.”

Yetta nodded, tiptoed out of the room, and presently Father Cary's large form passed the window on the way to the stable.

So again was Rosamund's vigil renewed, unbroken through several hours except by faint noises from without, the humming of a locust, the chirps of birds, the homely conversation of some chickens, who had stolen up to the little house, lonely for Mother Cary. She must have dozed, for it seemed only a short time before the kitchen clock struck eleven, and almost at the same moment the doctor stood in the doorway, with Mother Cary behind him.

The doctor's hair had been very much blown by the wind, but it would have taken more than wind to send his smile awry.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

“Morning!” he threw towards Rosamund.

She was at once aware that he thought of her only as the child’s nurse, oblivious of all that other men saw in her, of her beauty and grace, of the signs of wealth and well-being in her garments and bearing. It amused her, though her smile was, perhaps, a little disdainful.

The boy was better; the doctor could find no serious injuries. “I am sure the car barely touched him,” Rosamund said, and the doctor nodded.

“But it sometimes takes so little to shock the life out of a little underfed, weakened body like this,” he said. “There’s nothing to fight with, nothing to build on.”

Rosamund’s hand went over her heart. “Then you think,” she asked, “you think that he will not——”

“On the contrary, I am very sure that he *will*,” the doctor smiled at her. “Mother Cary, here, will teach you how to make him well.”

Mother Cary laid her wrinkled hand on the girl’s arm, but Rosamund’s eyes filled with tears. “Poor mite!” she said, bending over the child, “we will try to make you well—but I don’t know what for!”

Then Mother Cary spoke for the first time since her return. “Don’t you trouble yourself about the what for, dearie,” she said. “Folks is got plenty to

The LAND of CONTENT

keep 'em busy with the 'what way' and the 'what next' without troublin' themselves with the 'what for.' Ain't it so, Doctor?"

"It most certainly is," the red-headed doctor agreed, running his fingers through his already tousled hair. When he had given her further directions for the care of the child and driven off behind his jogging old white mare, he seemed to have left with her some of his own happy energy and assurance. Quite suddenly, the fatigue of her sleepless night fell from her, and from some unsuspected inner store-house of strength there crept a serenity and determination hitherto undreamed of. The boy would sleep, the doctor had told her, until late afternoon, probably awake hungry and thirsty, and then ought to sleep again; he must be kept very quiet, nourished regularly and lightly, made clean and comfortable; such careful and ceaseless nursing should, in a week or two, bring him out with even more strength than he had had before. So, until afternoon, there would be little for her to do.

She went into the kitchen to be with the old woman, who was moving about with her queer, crab-like motion of crutches and hands, preparing their dinner; Yetta had taken herself to the fields.

"No, indeedy, you can't help me one mite," Mother Cary declared, "exceptin' by settin' in that

The LAND of CONTENT

arm cheer and puttin' your pretty head back and restin.' There's nothin' I enjoy more'n a body to talk to whilst I'm a gettin' dinner, or supper. Yetta ain't that kind of a body, though! Land! The way the child can talk, and the things she knows!" Mother Cary turned about from her biscuit board to emphasize her horror. "Honey," she said, impressively, "that child knows more o' the world, the bad side of it, than—well, than I do!"

Rosamund smiled, and the old woman shook her head at her. "Oh, I was brought up in the city, honey," she told her, "so I know more about it than you think for. That's what makes me glad the doctor brought us a girl, this time; she's the first girl we've had this summer. I wisht it might be that she could stay up here as I did, but land! they ain't but one Pap! Pap jest made *me* stay, and me a cripple, too! He said he couldn't be happy without somebody to look after; and whilst it was a new idea to me then, I come to see the sense of it many a long year ago! That poor little Yetta! It's her eyes is bad. They ain't so bad but what they won't do well enough for most things; but all she knows how to do is to sew beads and buttons and run a big sewin' machine in a shop. They say her eyes won't hold out for that! Land! If I was rich, I'd have her taught music, that's what I'd do! You jest ought to hear the child

The LAND of CONTENT

sing, dearie! To hear her in the evenin's settin' down on the fence an' singin', why, it's prettier 'n a whip-poor-will a-callin'. It wouldn't surprise me a mite if Yetta could be learnt to sing that well, with some new songs and such, that folks would pay money to hear her!"

"Perhaps we could find some way to help her," Miss Randall suggested. Mother Cary flashed a keen look at her.

"Do you know any rich folks, honey, that might?" she asked eagerly. "Yetta's a good little thing, for all the bad she knows. An' she jest loves an' loves whatever is pretty an' sweet!"

"I think perhaps I do know someone," Rosamund said. "But I wanted especially to ask you to let me board with you here for a while. Is there room for me?"

"Room a plenty, dearie," the old woman said, as she hobbled to the door to strike the metal hoop that swung from the over-hanging floor of the second story. "But," she added, when she had sent the summons ringing out to Pap and Yetta, and had come back and seated herself near the girl, "but there ain't any call for you to pay. Pap an' me has a plenty to share with folks that come our way; and you're helpin' with Timmy. I'd be real pleased to have you stay."

The LAND *of* CONTENT

But Rosamund hesitated. "I'm afraid I cannot do that," she said, "unless you will let me pay something. I can afford it, really," she added, smiling.

For a long moment the old woman looked at her, keenly, kindly, with the faintest, tenderest, most teasing smile on her little wrinkled face that was as brown as a nut. "An' can't you really afford to visit?" she asked. "There's a plenty of folks that can afford to pay and to give; there ain't so many as can afford to take and to be done for. Ain't you forgettin' which kind you be?"

Rosamund lifted her head, and looked directly into the twinkling, faded old eyes. "No," she said, "I'm not forgetting the kind I am! I think I am only beginning to find out!"

Mother Cary laid her hand over the girl's in her usual gesture of caress before she hobbled to the dinner table. Pap and Yetta had come in and were already seating themselves.

It was the sweetest meal that Rosamund had ever tasted; but she had still to find out more about herself. They had not risen from the table when a musical view-haloo sounded up from the road below the stretch of woods, and in a moment Flood and Pendleton sprang out of the big red car and came briskly up the little walk. Rosamund went forward to meet them.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

"Why, I say," said Flood, beaming at her, "you're looking right as a trivet, you know!"

Pendleton drawled: "Ah, fair knight-errantess! Miss Nightingale! Also Rose o' the World! You wouldn't be smiling like that if you knew Cecilia's state of mind!"

Rosamund laughed, and held out her hand to them. "I can imagine it," she said. "It's plain that I had better keep out of her way for a time!"

"I'm at your service," cried Flood bowing low with mock servility, delighted at her merry mood, at her smiles which included even himself.

But Pendleton understood her better. "Now, what are you up to, Rosy?" he asked, severely, uneasily. She came directly to the point.

"I am going to stay here," she announced.

Both men stared at her. "How d'ye mean?" asked Flood weakly.

"The deuce you are!" cried Pendleton.

"Oh! With Mrs. Reeves!" Flood beamed, as if he had found an answer even while asking.

"Is that it? Why didn't you say so? Where is Eleanor, anyway?" Pendleton asked.

Rosamund laughed again. "I'm sure I don't know!" she said. "She is at Bluemont, and that's miles away, isn't it? I haven't even asked. No, Marshall, no, Mr. Flood, I am going to stay here, right

The LAND *of* CONTENT

here, here in this house, or this valley, or this mountain, but here, here as long as I like—forever, if I want to! That's what I mean—or part of it!"

It was evident that her laughter carried more conviction than any amount of seriousness would have done. Poor Flood's face got redder, and he suddenly, after a stare, turned on his heel, and walked rather slowly down the path to his car, standing beside it with his arms folded, looking across at the strip of woods, but seeing nothing. Pendleton, however, felt it incumbent upon him to remonstrate.

"Of course, we all know you can afford any whim you like, Rosamund," he said, in the tone of the old friend who dares, "but I think I ought to warn you that this sort of thing is not—not in the best of taste, you know! It is not done, really—in—in—among our sort, you know!"

Rosamund openly showed her amusement. "That is undoubtedly true, my dear Marshall," she said, "but this time it is going to be done! I am going to do it! You think it is a freak, and I'm sure I can't say it isn't, because I don't in the least know what it is!"

"I think you're mad. If I had not been an unwilling observer of the accident, I should believe it was you had got concussion, and not the infant."

"My dear Marshall, your diagnosis is wrong! I

The LAND *of* CONTENT

may have a—a disease, but it is not madness. Did you ever hear of people who had suffered from loss of memory for years and years and quite suddenly recovered it? Perhaps I'm one of those—I feel as if I had only just come to my senses!"

"I don't know what you're talking about!" said Pendleton.

"Don't you? I thought you wouldn't!" Again she laughed, and at the sound Flood started, looked back towards the house where she stood, radiant and lovely, framed in the doorway, and then got into his car.

But Pendleton had one further protest. "You *can't* stay in this—this hovel, alone, Rosamund! You can't think of doing it! Please remember, *I* have got to go back to Cecilia! What on earth am I going to say to her?"

"Poor Marshall! Tell Cecilia, with my love, that I am going to stay here for the present. She may send me some clothes by express, or not, as she likes. Please give her my love, and tell her that I hope she will have a pleasant visit with the Whartons—she had better go there to-morrow. And try, my dear Marshall, to assure her of my sanity! Good-by! Don't let me keep you waiting!"

Pendleton pushed back his hat, thrust his hands deep into his pockets, and looked at her. Then he

The LAND *of* CONTENT

drew a long breath and delivered himself, oracularly. "Rosamund," he said, "you're a fool! You can't, you really can't, do this sort of thing, you know. Why, my dear girl, it—it is not *done*, you know, in—"

But Rosamund ran back into the house, turned a flashing, smiling look upon him over her shoulder, cried, "Good-by, Marshall! Give my love to Cecilia!" and was gone, leaving him there agape. There was really nothing for him to do but rejoin Flood.

Cecilia, however, remained for a time inconsolable. Flood and Pendleton motored back across the mountain, told Mrs. Maxwell of Rosamund's decision to remain indefinitely in the little cottage on the mountain, and forthwith avoided the presence of the irate lady as much as possible. Fortunately, the newly arriving week-end guests had to be entertained. They were very good and very stupid; but, as Pendleton said, anything was better than Cecilia in a temper.

Left to herself, Cecilia's mind was occupied with a veritable jack-straw puzzle of events, motives, contingencies. She had had good reason, before this, to know that Rosamund enjoyed unforeseen departures; but that anyone should deliberately choose to forego the luxuries of Oakleigh, to stay, instead, in what Mrs. Maxwell considered a peasant's cottage—such conduct, such a choice, were beyond the lady's imagi-

The LAND *of* CONTENT

nation and experience. Rosamund must be wild; for surely not even pique at Cecilia's generalship, not even annoyance at Flood's attentions, not even the desire to be near that tiresome Eleanor Reeves, could have determined her to such a move. As for the accident, anyone could have cared for the child. Rosamund could have paid a dozen nurses to stay there, if she was charitably inclined; and certainly Mr. Flood had shown that he wanted to do what was right. Cecilia could not understand it.

VII

AFTER the retreat of Pendleton and Flood, Rosamund went back to the little boy's room, smiling. Mother Cary looked up at her with a face slightly troubled.

"Seems like your friends ain't willing to have you stay here," she said. "Is there anything calling you home, honey, anything that needs you?"

The girl shook her head. "I think I have never been needed anywhere in all my life, until now," she said. Then, perhaps because of Flood's words, she remembered Eleanor. "Well, perhaps there is one person who has needed me, from time to time; and, dear Mother Cary, she is somewhere near here. She came to Bluemont to be near Doctor Ogilvie."

"There's a many a one that does," said Mother Cary.

"My friend is Mrs. Reeves. Do you know her?"

"Land, honey, rich city folks don't bother to become acquainted with the likes of me!" the old woman said, smiling.

"Mrs. Reeves is not 'rich city folks.' She is working for her living all the while she is here in the

The LAND of CONTENT

mountains; she is companion for another of the doctor's patients, Mrs. Hetherbee."

"Oh, I know!" Yetta exclaimed. "I saw her in the post-office one day askin' for the mail, while the old one waited outside in the automobile. Gee! That old one looked cross!"

Rosamund laughed. "And do you know where they live?"

"Sure! Want me to show you?"

"I should like it ever and ever so much if you would take a note there for me. Could you do that? Is it too far?"

Mother Cary patted Yetta's dark hair. "She can go over with Pap, when he goes to the store," she said. "She'll be real glad to; won't you, Yetta?"

So it came to pass that in the late afternoon Eleanor came in Mrs. Hetherbee's car. The boy Tim was resting so quietly that Rosamund had gone outside; she went swiftly down the little red path to the gate, and the two met, arms entwining, cheek to cheek, with little laughs and questions and soft cries.

"Your note said there was an accident!" These were Eleanor's first words. "Darling, that is not why you are here? You are not hurt?"

"Why I am here; but it was not I—I was not hurt! Look at me—feel me!"

"Nor Cecilia?"

The LAND of CONTENT

“Nor anyone, you precious, that you know! A tiny mite of a boy, Eleanor, and I stayed to take care of him.”

“You?”

“Oh, don’t say it like that! And yet I don’t wonder!”

Eleanor’s arm was about her at once. “Sweet, I was only wondering that Cecilia let you!”

“Cecilia did not let me; and you were wondering, too, why I stayed, what really kept me. You are quite right; of my own accord I shouldn’t have stayed. My own impulse would not have moved that way. I should have taken the easy, the obvious course, if I had been left to choose. But I wasn’t, you see.”

Eleanor looked at her keenly. This note of bitterness was quite new. Suddenly she remembered Ogilvie; but almost on the instant Rosamund spoke again.

“What manner of man do you find this red-headed doctor of yours?”

Eleanor laughed. “He gets his own way with people!” She looked at her friend, but Rosamund’s face was turned from her. “I have never met anyone else like him. I thought at first that he was two people—a man of heart and a man of science; you know his reputation, and yet he stays up here mainly,

The LAND of CONTENT

I am told, to be near these mountain people. He says that they trust him, and seems to think that excuse enough for staying."

"I thought he stayed for the air or something?"

"He did, but now he is perfectly well again. And his character is not dual; nothing so romantic. He is a man of science just because he is a man of heart. He is one of the simplest people I have ever known."

"You seem to know him pretty well."

"Oh, he is the first object of interest to all his patients; we talk of nothing else! I am only a case to him."

Rosamund laughed. "Very likely, dear! And what does he think of you, as a case?"

Eleanor's face took on its shadow of sadness. "He—he does not know," she said; and Rosamund drew a swift breath of pain.

Eleanor came daily after that, Mrs. Hetherbee, a worn, eager little woman with restless eyes, showing herself entirely complaisant when it seemed likely that the very well known Miss Randall would return Eleanor's visits. Her attitude towards her companion had been pleasant enough before, but it certainly took on a new warmth after Rosamund's arrival in the neighborhood, and when she learned that Mrs. Reeves was one of Miss Randall's lifelong friends.

The LAND of CONTENT

"You will have to drive over and call on Mrs. Hetherbee, Rose," Eleanor assured her. "If you don't I shall feel that I'm using her car under false pretenses!"

So Rosamund called, and Mrs. Hetherbee basked in the distinction of being the only person at the Summit whom Miss Randall cared to know. Thereafter Eleanor came daily across the valley, tenderly sweet as only she knew how to be, almost at once becoming fast friends with Mother Cary, and hanging over the boy with aching heart and arms weary of their emptiness. Rosamund always felt as if a hand of pain clutched at her heart as she watched them.

"Who is he?" Eleanor had asked the first day she saw him. "Is he the child of these people?"

"He is a waif," Rosamund said, and told how Mother Cary made of the little white house a refuge of love for the needy ones of the city. "And this tiny boy, Doctor Ogilvie says, needs love more than most of them. The Charities have tried to have him adopted; but most people do not want boys—not homely little boys, whose fathers were not at all good and whose mothers died very young and very forlorn. Timmy has gone begging—and he will have to go back after his summer here is over. The most to be hoped for is that he will go back stronger; then

The LAND *of* CONTENT

perhaps he will be prettier, and some one may want him. It is really unspeakably pathetic."

So Eleanor hung over the child, and gradually there grew up in Rosamund's heart and mind a plan, which, as it matured, was to alter the course of life for all of them.

But that was not until later; and while to her on the mountain the days passed uneventfully enough, they were days of distressful change for her sister. During the first week or two, Cecilia sent her four letters and eleven telegrams—the telegrams being duly delivered with the letters, whenever Father Cary drove across the valley to the store. Rosamund read them all, pondered, smiled, and then sent off a reassuring telegram by Eleanor. Later she wrote two letters; the first was to her banker, and in the second she said:

DEAREST CISSY:

Don't be too cross! You've always been an angel to me, and I love you; but I am tired, tired, tired of the sort of life we lead; and the other day, when Mr. Flood's man so obligingly bumped into the poor little boy, I was wondering how on earth I could get out of it for a time, get some sort of change. Then, the people here seemed to take it for granted that I would stay to nurse the child. It was the first time in my life that anyone had ever taken for granted that I

The LAND *of* CONTENT

would do the right thing if it meant personal discomfort. Before, I had always been praised and applauded if I merely happened to do it. I don't suppose I can make you understand, dearest Cissy; but just that made all the difference in the world to me. And now I am going to stay here—for how long, I do not know. Until I get tired of it, perhaps, or until I can think up something else. The mountains are so big, Cecilia, and the stars so bright, and the sun does such good work!

I have put some money to your credit; I think there will be enough to last you for a while. You can even get the motor car, if you want to. And if I were you, I should stop in town and get a few linens and perhaps a hat or two and a parasol at Lucille's. You will need a lot of things at Bar Harbor. I suppose you will go right up to the Whartons'.

You say I have broken up Mr. Flood's plans. I'm afraid I don't altogether agree to that. There was only another week-end left in June, and we were not going to stay any longer than that. I do not choose to think that you referred to other plans of his. If you do, please understand that I have no interest in them.

Give my love to the Whartons; they have always thought me queer, anyway, so you will not have to account to them for me. And don't be too cross!

Cecilia's reply, which the doctor brought up the mountain a week later, was dated from Bar Harbor. It read:

The LAND *of* CONTENT

DEAR ROSAMUND:

It's no use saying what I think. But you are exceedingly disagreeable about Mr. Flood, and the mountains were just as big at Oakleigh, and the sun is just as hot in one place as another at this time of year, and it is very selfish of you to break up everybody's plans. But at least I can say that I am glad you remain sane upon some subjects. I hope you got the trunks I sent over to Bluemont Summit; and I took your advice about the linens. There was a white serge, too, that was unusually good for the price. I haven't decided about the car. We play bridge here twice a day, and my game seems rather uncertain, since the shock you gave me. And Minnie has invited Benson Flood for two weeks, and a good many things may happen. I may not buy the car after all. I told Minnie that you were camping in the mountains, and she only raised her eyebrows. Well—all I can say is that poor dear Mamma always admitted Colonel Randall was peculiar. If you are not going to wear your opals this summer, you may as well let me have them.

Rosamund laughed aloud at the letter. Doctor Ogilvie was sitting on the side of Timmy's bed, and she had gone to the window to read it. At her laugh he looked up.

"Good news?" he asked, cheerfully. He was always cheerful, as cheerful as a half-grown puppy.

The LAND of CONTENT

“Neither good nor bad,” she replied, “only amusing.”

“But whatever is amusing is good,” he asserted.

She looked up from folding her letter, to see whether he was in earnest. “That,” she said, slowly, “is rather a unique point of view!”

He ran his fingers through his hair, and came towards her. “Unique? I hope not,” he replied. “Oh, I see what you mean—you’re taking issue with my word ‘amusing’! I’m not thinking of passing the time, as a definition of that word; I’m thinking of fun, mirth, that kind of amusement—nothing to do with chorus ladies and things to eat and drink and that sort of thing, you know!”

She was learning to watch his smile as one watches a barometer; to-day the signs were certainly propitious. There was something of indulgence in her look as she replied to him, the indulgence one feels towards the young and inexperienced.

“So you think it is a good thing to be amused—in your way?” she asked.

He nodded. “Most assuredly. Nothing like it. And the most amusing thing I know is the way we can cheat disease and dirt and a few other nice little things like them—turn the joke on them! Now, there’s Master Tim—eh, youngster? Life will seem like a good deal of a joke to you, when you get over

The LAND *of* CONTENT

that ache in your hip, won't it? Think you'll find fun in life then, don't you, old chap? And there's a girl down in the valley—by the way, how'd you like to go down with me and make a call? Do you a lot of good!"

He cocked his head on one side and looked at Rosamund inquiringly, persuasively.

She had seen him every day for two weeks, and this was the first moment he had looked at her with the least shadow of personal interest. Until now, she had felt that she was no more to him than an article of furniture, certainly less of a personage than Mother Cary or Yetta or the sick child. She had a feeling that he tolerated her solely as an aid, that she had not even the virtue of being a 'case'; and she told herself in secret disgust that while she did not possess the last virtue, she at least shared the patients' fault, or absurdity; she had to admit that he piqued her interest, and she resented his doing so, blaming him even while disgusted at herself.

But, to-day, with the charming woman's intuition, she knew that he was seeing her with different eyes, as if she had only just now come within his range of vision; yet she knew that his was a look that she had not encountered from other men.

Hitherto, the men she knew had been quite evidently aware of her beauty. She had always ac-

The LAND of CONTENT

cepted, quite calmly, the fact that there was enough of that to be of first consideration, over and beyond anything else that she might possess. This country doctor was the first man who had ever appeared unconscious of the excellence of her femininity; but the same pride which had led her to repel Flood's admiration forbade her making any conscious appeal for Ogilvie's. There was, after all, very little of the coquette in her. The amusement that his obliviousness caused her, or the interest it excited in her, was only increased by his suggestion that she should accompany him on a visit to some mountaineer's cottage; he had offered it as likely to do her good, and not, as she might not unreasonably have expected, that her going would brighten or benefit or honor the mountain girl. It was a new experience, surely, for Rosamund Randall!

On their way down the mountain, which White Rosy knew so well that to guide her would have been entirely superfluous, he talked cheerfully, as always, of many things—of White Rosy herself, of the mountain people, of the view across the valley, of roadside shrubs and flowers. It was the first of their drives together, and the woman they went to see that day became a most important factor in their destinies.

At first she listened to him with scarcely more interest than she would have felt towards the amiable

The LAND of CONTENT

volubility of any of the countrymen; but his talk soon rose above the commonplace. Insensibly he became aware that the girl beside him could understand, could sympathize, respond.

“ I know you can't put ropes on the world and try to pull back against its turning round,” the doctor said when at a bend of the road they could look down almost upon the roof of a cottage below, a cottage with a sadly neglected garden patch at one side and a tumbled-down chimney. “ It's a good deal better to stand behind and push, or to get in front and pull. I'm fond of pulling, myself! But when it comes to the individual instance, it's sometimes more merciful to stand in the way of what we're pleased to call progress. Now that girl down there—daughter of a horse-dealer, the owner of a little store at one of the crossroads in the other valley—it would really have been better if she had never gone to school, never been away from home, never learned of anything beyond what she has. She has been taught enough to make her know how badly off she is. Her father was ambitious, and sent his daughter to board in town and go to the high school. She stayed there two years, and absorbed about as much as she could; then she came back home, but her education had taught her something finer and better than what she came back to. She did just what any restless young

The LAND of CONTENT

thing would do. Inside of a year she eloped with the handsomest rascal in the mountains. And Tobet's a moonshiner!"

"Moonshiner! But I thought the Government had done away with all that sort of thing? I heard a man say, at a place where I was staying before I came here, that there was really no more of it left, in these mountains. The men are intimidated, the stills discovered and broken up. Isn't that so?"

A wry smile from the doctor answered her. "Then there must be some natural springs of it about here," he said. He pointed back over his shoulder with his whip. "See that big pine up there on the left? Well, if an empty bottle be left there, at the foot of the tree, at night, with a fifty-cent piece under it, the bottle will be filled in the morning, and the coin gone. I don't ask any questions, and I suppose she would not answer any; but if she would, Grace Tobet could explain how that sort of thing happens."

Rosamund was not greatly impressed. "Well, there probably is not very much of it," she said, "and they must be quite used to it. I don't suppose it does them much harm, does it?"

The doctor was silent for a moment. Then he said, and his voice was very low, "Grace Tobet has lately lost her baby, her little girl. Joe came in one morning, struck by white lightning, as they say

The LAND of CONTENT

around here. He fell on the baby, and Grace came in from the garden too late. She told Mother Cary that perhaps it was just as well."

Rosamund paled. Presently the doctor went on, "And you see, poor Grace knows better things; she remembers that town and the school, and the little pleasures and gayeties there."

Neither spoke again until White Rosy drew up before the Tobet cottage. The front windows and door were closed, but on the sill of the back door a woman crouched, a woman in faded brown calico, whose face, when she raised it from her arms, showed a dark bruise on one side. She rose and smiled wanly.

"I've brought a lady to see you, Mrs. Tobet," the doctor said. He introduced them as formally as if Grace Tobet had been a duchess. Then he said, "Now you two talk, while I hunt up Joe. Where is he?"

The woman nodded towards the front of the house, and the doctor went indoors. Rosamund and Mrs. Tobet looked at each other.

To the mountain woman this stranger was a being from another sphere, who could not touch her own at any point of intercourse; while Rosamund was too deeply moved by the woman's story, by the livid mark on her temple, by the squalor of her dress and

The LAND *of* CONTENT

surroundings contrasting so strongly with the intelligence of her face, to find words. It was Mrs. Tobet who first remembered one of those phrases of common coin which are the medium of conversation the world over.

“Stranger about here?” she asked.

“I am staying with Mrs. Cary on the mountain,” Rosamund replied; and, as, in a flash, the other woman’s face was lit by a smile scarcely less radiant than Mother Cary’s own.

“A friend o’ Mother Cary’s, be ye? I’m glad to see ye! I can’t ask you into the front room, but there’s a seat in my spring-house, real pleasant and cool; won’t ye come try it?”

She led the way through the neglected garden to the little spring-house that was built of the rough stone of the hillsides, roofed over with sod. In front of the door-space was a wooden bench, where Rosamund sat down, while Grace drew a glass of sparkling water from the cool spring inside. It was a delicious draught.

“My baby could jest pull herself up by that bench,” Grace Tobet said, as she took the empty glass. “She used to play here while I tended to the milk. Joe’s sold the cow now; but that didn’t make any difference; there wasn’t any reason for keeping her.”

The LAND *of* CONTENT

The woman's deep-set dark eyes strained out towards the mountain-tops. Rosamund felt herself suddenly brought face to face with some primal force of which she had hitherto known nothing; for the first time in her life she looked upon the agony of bereft mother-love laid bare. She had been with Eleanor through her loss, but Eleanor's grief had seemed to turn her to white stone; this other mother's was a fiercely scorching, consuming flame of anguish before which Rosamund shrank away as from the blast of a furnace. Before she dared to speak, however, Grace Tobet's face was smiling again.

"I know you must like it up there," she said. "I do miss the mountains so, livin' down here in the valley. I don't know what I'd do ef it wasn't for Mother Cary's light. I look up there for it every night of my life, an' it's always there. An' I ain't the only one it talks to, neither."

"It has its message for everyone who sees it, I think," Rosamund agreed. "I know, because I am living under it!"

Grace looked into her eyes, and nodded. "Ain't it so?" she replied. "Why, there's never been a night when I was in trouble that her little lamp hasn't said to me, 'Here I am, honey, an' I know all about it. When it gets so bad you can't stand it, you jest

The LAND of CONTENT

send for me; I'll come!' An' she does come, too!"

There was silence between them for a moment; then Rosamund said, only wondering at herself long afterwards, "It says more than that! It is telling me that there is something in life worth while, that there's courage and goodness in many a dark corner where we'd never think of looking for them; oh, it is teaching me a great deal!"

"Yes," Grace Tobet agreed, and all barriers between them were gone.

They found so much to say that the hour the doctor spent with Joe passed like a moment. When at last he came out of the house and back to the spring for a drink of the pure water, the two women walked together to the buggy; and before she took her place Rosamund, yielding to a sudden impulse of which she knew she would have been incapable a fortnight earlier, turned and clasped both of the older woman's hands, and looked into her face.

"Will you be friends with me?" she asked simply.

Grace Tobet's eyes widened. It seemed long before she spoke. Then, "Yes," she said, and both knew that there was something sealed between them.

"May I bring a friend of mine to see you? She lost her baby boy last year, and—and we are afraid

The LAND of CONTENT

she is going to be—blind. Perhaps you can comfort her, in some way. She needs friends. May I bring her?”

“Pray do,” Grace said, in the quaint mountain speech.

When they were slowly climbing the mountain, the doctor turned to Rosamund with a quizzical smile. “You and Grace seemed to progress somewhat!” he said.

For a few moments Rosamund pondered; then she met his look, but there was no smile on her face.

“Do you know,” she said, “I have always thought that the people I lived among were the only ones who really knew life, the only ones who felt, or thought, or *lived!* Lately I seem to have come into a new world.”

The doctor’s smile faded, and he ran his fingers through his hair. “No,” he said, “it’s the same old world! Human nature’s pretty much the same, wherever you find it. Human experience is bounded by life, and the boundaries are not very wide, either. It’s the different combinations that make things interesting, although the basic elements remain the same!”

“Then I almost think there are more basic elements among these people than among—my kind!”

“Oh, no! The difference is that with your kind

The LAND *of* CONTENT

the surface is rounded and polished, and the points of possible contact therefore fewer; with the other kind the rougher surfaces offer more points of contact, more chances of combinations, that's all. And," he added, "even that's only partly true!"

Afterwards, when she went over in her mind the events of the whole afternoon, she wondered how Flood or Pendleton would have expressed themselves on the subject; but at the moment she was too deeply concerned with her problems to form any mental digression. For a while neither spoke; then she said:

"Reserve seems to have no place here! I find myself saying what I think, describing what I feel, opening my heart to Mother Cary, to Mrs. Tobet, to you—to anyone! I do not know myself!"

The doctor's face changed from one expression to another and another; he was about to speak, but her look was intense, rapt, uplifted, and very serious; he evidently changed his mind. Neither spoke again until they stopped before the little green gate. Then, he passed his hand over his head as if suddenly missing something.

"Lord bless my soul!" he exclaimed. "I believe I left my hat at Grace's!"

VIII

ELEANOR was most free to motor across the valley—where now a double magnet drew her—while Mrs. Hetherbee still slumbered in the mornings. Since the first day when Tim's little hand had reached up to touch her cheek, she had yearned towards the boy. Rosamund laughingly accused her of coming to see him instead of herself; Eleanor, in reply, held the mite to her heart, smiling over his curls through gathering tears, at Rosamund.

The summer had done much for Timmy. The pain in his hip was disappearing, and by the end of August there were pink baby curves where the skin had been white and drawn over his little bones. There were times, when he was cuddling against Eleanor or tumbling about in the sun, that he was almost pretty. He was glad enough of ministrations from Rosamund or Mother Cary, but Eleanor was the bright lady of his adoration.

"My White Lady," he called her, taking great pains always to pronounce every consonant of the beloved name, though he usually discarded most of them as not at all necessary to intelligent conversation. With the inquisitiveness of childhood, he soon

The LAND of CONTENT

discovered that she had once had a little boy of her own.

"Where is your little boy?" he asked one day with infantile directness.

"He is gone away," she told him.

But that was not enough. "Did somebody 'dopt your little boy?" he persisted.

Eleanor looked at Rosamund; the same thought was in the minds of both. How many times had little Tim been offered for inspection to would-be adopters, and refused? How much of it had he understood? What had it all meant, to his poor little lonely heart? Eleanor drew him more closely to her.

"W'y don't you tell Timmy? *Did* somebody 'dopt your little boy?"

She gave him the simplest answer. "Yes, dear," she said.

Timmy was thoughtful for a moment. Then he said, "I guess *he* must have been a *pretty* little boy!"

Neither Eleanor nor Rosamund could speak, but Tim was oblivious of their emotion. A new idea, an entrancing one, had presented itself. He climbed upon Eleanor's lap, took her face between his palms, and said, smiling divinely,

"If I was a great big man, White Lady, *I* would 'dopt *you!*"

It seemed to Rosamund that Eleanor, while

The LAND of CONTENT

reaching out with all the ardor of her loneliness, was being daily wrung by seeing him; she spoke of it to Ogilvie, after Eleanor herself had denied it. But he was inclined to agree with Mrs. Reeves that it could not harm her.

"Women find comfort in strange things," he said. "Let her have her own way."

Rosamund sighed. "It does not seem to me that her summer here has helped her at all," she said. "She is more a 'White Lady' than ever. I wish you would tell me what you think of her, Doctor Ogilvie!"

"I cannot tell you any more than I have," he replied. "There is no incurable fault of vision, no defect of the eye itself. If I could prescribe a large dose of happiness for her, she would get well. As it is—nerves have very elusive freaks sometimes, you know!"

"Then she will—she will be—oh! Don't say that! Not my Eleanor!"

"Now you are taking too much for granted. I do *not* say it. Her eyes are no worse than when she came here. If she were strong they would recover; if she were happy she would quickly become strong! As it is—who can say?"

"Oh, how helpless you all are!" she cried.

He ran his fingers through his hair—his cap was

The LAND *of* CONTENT

apt to be anywhere but on his head. "Helpless! Good Lord, yes!"

As the weeks passed, they had become very good friends, spending many hours together, driving about the countryside as he made his rounds. Knowing Eleanor to be there in the mornings, Ogilvie fell into the way of making Mother Cary's his first house of visitation in the afternoon. They were always waiting for him at the gate—the now inseparable three; and if Rosamund left all show of eager greeting to Yetta and little Tim, the doctor seemed never to notice the omission. It was enough to find her there.

Hitherto, John Ogilvie had passed his life, first, in study, and later in investigation and service. Women had appeared as people who cooked his meals, or as nurses trained to careful obedience, or as those who, more or less ill, were apt to be more or less querulous. There were one or two who had seemed to possess different characteristics, especially here in the mountains. There was Mother Cary, who had helped him on more than one occasion when more trained assistance, if not assistance more experienced, was not to be had; he warmly loved Mother Cary, whose indulgent affection persisted in regarding him as a boy—a clever boy, to be sure, but not by any means one who had outgrown the need of maternal attention. And there were Grace Tobet, and a few

The LAND *of* CONTENT

other of the mountaineers' wives, who stood out from the mass of women as he had known them.

Miss Randall was of still another sort, already beginning to inspire him with emotions new and different. But he was too far past the introspective phase that is a part of early youth to analyze his emotions. He was less concerned with the phenomenon of his own heart throbs than with the happily recurring hours of their being together, and the increasingly dreary intervals when his duties carried him away from her.

He knew very well to what world she belonged. He had had enough experience of it among his patients, the overfed, overwrought women who came to Bluemont in the summer to be near him—near the young doctor of high scientific attainments, who remained in this out-of-the-way place of his own choice, "Who can be just as disagreeable and firm, my dear, as if his sign hung two doors from Fifth Avenue, and whose fees are only one-fifth as high as Dr. Blake's," as one of them wrote home. Even if she had not come into the valley as one of Flood's guests, he would have known of what class she was a part. Mrs. Hetherbee, in her overflowing complaisance after Rosamund's call, had poured out to his bored and impatient ears, in a torrent that was not to be stemmed, the facts of the girl's inheritance and position.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

“Witherspoon Randall’s only daughter! He made all his money, millions, they say, in Georgia pine—only had to go out on the land he had inherited and cut down trees! Think of it! And left every penny to this girl, nothing to the mother, nothing to the mother’s daughter by her first marriage, nothing to charity—everything, everything to this girl! And you know she is just the smartest of the smart, in town; thanks to her sister’s marriage, in the very heart of the most exclusive ——”

So he had, in spite of himself, been told what she was, given some idea of what she possessed; yet so wholly did he discard as immaterial the material things, and measure her only by the weight of personality, that Rosamund was deceived into thinking that he knew nothing about her.

The friends she made while at Mother Cary’s had not questioned her; she had dropped among them from an automobile, and later her sister had sent her some clothes of deceptive simplicity. Their seeming to accept her as she tried to appear deceived her into believing that they were not curious; as a matter of fact their code of good manners forbade their showing curiosity; nothing could prevent their having it. She believed that Ogilvie, also, had been deceived in like manner. During their drives together she carefully avoided any reference to her posses-

The LAND *of* CONTENT

sions; it amused her to imagine how surprised he would be when he knew.

Yet she found herself becoming more and more contented that he did not know. In her own world she had been unable to ignore her wealth; she could read knowledge of it on every face, deference to it in every courtesy, and the very fact that it had set her apart was largely the cause of her old discontent. She would not voluntarily have discarded it, but she would have welcomed an escape from all but its agreeable consequences.

The other men she had known might have been able to command riches larger than her own, or possessed that which weighed equally in the social scales; yet they remained conscious of what her very name signified, and invariably showed it. Even Mr. Flood, or so she believed, although he could have bought all she owned without missing what it cost him, showed her the usual deference.

Therefore, there was something fresh and unaccustomed in her growing friendship with Ogilvie. It amused and piqued her; in her ignorance of his real state of mind it even touched her. She found herself eager to be real with him, to show him depths of heart and mind which she herself had scarcely suspected. Other men saw only the social glaze which hid her real self and reflected themselves; Ogilvie

The LAND of CONTENT

had a way of looking at her which pierced the surface, although, because of his obvious sincerity, it caused her no resentment. So, during the glowing summer, while the hot noons ripened the corn in the valley and the cold nights left early beacons of flame in the young maples on the mountains, they grew to know each other; she serene in her belief in his unsuspecting simplicity, he ignoring in her what other men would so greatly have valued. As far as the things of the world affected them, they might, on their drives, have been alone in a deserted land, or at least in one peopled only by aborigines.

For always he had as an objective point some mountain cottage where his aid was needed. At first she was inclined to be curious about the mountaineers; theoretically they ought to have been interesting, quaint, amusing. But in reality she scarcely saw them; when she did, she found nothing appealing in their lank figures, and faces hidden in the depths of flat bonnets or under large straw hats pulled down over their eyes.

"They all seem to avoid me," she told Ogilvie one day when he had come out of a house with a tiny child in his arms, which had slid down and run away at sight of her. "Do they think I'm the bogey-man or the plague?"

He laughed aloud at her petulance. "They don't

The LAND of CONTENT

stop to think," he said. "They are as timid as chipmunks, or as any other hunted woodland creatures."

"Oh, hunted!" she cried, as if to repudiate what he implied. "I've heard you talk like that before! Do you still believe in that nonsense about the secret stills and the Government spies, and all that?"

"Yes, I believe in it."

"I have been here eight weeks, and I have not heard another soul speak of it!"

"How many of the 'natives,' as you call them, have you met?"

She pursed her lips. "I don't believe there are many to see!"

"Allow me to remind you again of my feeble simile of the chipmunks!" he laughed. "And believe me, it is more apt than you think. For instance, have you seen the little Allen children?"

"What, the queer little animals that bend their arms over their eyes when you meet them, and live in that shanty back of Father Cary's pasture?"

He smiled at her description. "Precisely! The Carys' nearest neighbors, scarcely a mile away. And have you seen their mother?"

She seemed to be trying to remember.

"Come now," he teased. "don't tell me you don't believe they have a mother! The eldest child is not

The LAND of CONTENT

yet six, and the youngest of the five is two months old!"

She laughed and gave in. "No, I have not seen the mother, nor the father, nor the aunts, nor any of the rest of the family! But that is only one instance."

"There are many; you really may take my word for it, if it interests you to. But if you were to be here after the summer people go, then you'd see. They come out into the open then."

She still looked skeptical, and he pointed up the mountain. "Do you see that path?" he asked.

"No. Where?"

He laughed. "Caught, Miss Randall! A path is there, invisible though it is to you—to us. All through these woods there are paths, often little more than trails, well known to the mountaineers and often used. Sometimes they run for a mile or more beside the road, screened by the undergrowth; sometimes they keep higher up, or cross where a road could not, or follow the courses of the streams; but they are there. It is only one of the evidences of the mountaineers' secretiveness."

"Your simile was a good one! What animals they are!"

"So are we all."

The LAND of CONTENT

“ Oh, of course, you are the doctor, saying that! But you could scarcely class these creatures with ourselves! ”

He turned on the seat to look at her, and she met his gaze a little defiantly, on the defensive, for she knew him well enough by now to guess what his reply would be. For the first time she encountered in his eyes a look of appraisal as if he were weighing her value, even questioning it. Suddenly there arose between them the antagonism of their opposite points of view, of those differences in their minds and characters which must always arise between a man and a woman, and be settled by conquest or compromise, before happiness can be secure between them.

As he looked at her, more beautiful in her sudden proud defiance than he had ever before seen her, it flashed upon him who and what she was, and that what he had chosen to ignore might be none the less placing her beyond him. In his inexperience he was unprepared for the swift pain of the idea; instinctively defending himself, his defense was cruelly sharp.

The irony of his words stung her cheeks to a quick crimson.

“ I am not capable of judging of your class, Miss Randall! ” he said.

She might have understood, from the tremor in his voice, but she heard nothing but the meaning of

The LAND *of* CONTENT

the words. As she still looked into his eyes her own widened, and with the widening of their pupils seemed to grow black. For an instant they looked at one another so; but the moment was too tense to be one of revelation. Then she drew a gasping breath so sharp that it almost seemed to be a wordless cry of pain, and turned away.

Instantly he was filled with shame of having hurt her, and greater shame of having doubted her.

"Oh, forgive me," he cried. "Forgive me! Won't you forgive me?"

She lifted her head a little, still turned from him, but did not speak.

"Rosamund!" he cried. "Forgive me!"

It was now unmistakably a cry of pain, appealing and revealing; it steadied her, as a woman is always steadied by that tone in a man's voice, until the moment when she is prepared to welcome it. On the instant, she was no longer the woman of the past weeks, simple, companionable, revealing herself as naturally as a child; she was once more the Miss Randall the world knew, haughty, reserved, aloof. Even her eyes, as she turned to smile at him, were not those he had known.

"There is nothing in the world to forgive! I think we have been a little absurd!"

It was his turn to feel how words could lash.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

"I am glad you see it so," he said, and wondered, during the rest of their drive, filled as it was with the commonplace of small talk, how he could have forgotten her likeness to the vapid, futile, fashionable women at the Summit; while she, hurt and bewildered, was wondering what he had meant, whether he had known her all along for the person she was, Colonel Randall's daughter and only heir, and in the stupidity of a countryman had failed in the observance due to her position.

When White Rosy stopped at the little red gate, willingly, as always, the two children were there to welcome them. Ogilvie, in spite of Timmy's beseeching arms, would not stay to supper, as he often did.

Tim sat down on the brick path and lifted his voice in a wail. "Oh, ev'rybody's gonin' away!" he cried; and his anguish increased by his own words, he further declared, "Ev'rybody has went away!"

Rosamund picked up the boy, but he wriggled down from her arms. In spite of her care for him, and the good-fellowship there was between her and both the children, who were ordinarily devoted enough, nothing of the maternal had as yet been aroused in her; and in the moments when he needs the only comfort that satisfies childhood, a child knows instinctively whether there is aught of the mother in the arms that hold him.

The LAND of CONTENT

But Rosamund was in need of love to-day. "Why, Timmy," she cried, still holding him to her, "I am here! I have not gone away!"

"I don't want my White Lady to go away! I want my White Lady!" was Timmy's cry. "Ev'rybody's gonin' away!"

Now Yetta became voluble in explanation of his cry. "She is going away! She came over while you were gone, 'cause she said maybe she won't be able to come to-morrow. She says she's got to pack, 'cause the old one's going back to town. Lots o' people have gone already, it's so cold; and the old one thinks it's going to set in to rain, so she's going home, an' Mis' Reeves has got to go with her."

"My White Lady's gonin' away!" Tim wailed again, with a concentration of thought that might have been admirable under other circumstances. "Ev'rybody's gonin' away!"

Rosamund had been overwrought on the drive, and the boy's persistent cry was rasping her nerves. "Oh, for goodness' sake, Timmy, don't say that again! It is not true, Tim! I am here, and Yetta's here, and Mother Cary's here. Aren't we enough!"

"No, she ain't," Yetta cried, still informing. "She's gone down to her daughter's, 'cause the baby's sick. Pap took her, and maybe he'll stay all night, if it rains, an' he says it's going to for sure. And I

The LAND of CONTENT

know what to get for supper, and it's corn puddin' and jam!"

At last they had found the silencing note for Timmy. "'Ikes jam!" he announced. Then, apparently warming towards Rosamund, he encircled her knees with his arms. "'Ikes you, too!" he declared. "'Ikes ev'rybody!"

Rosamund was glad to laugh, to carry him, with swings and bounces and kisses stolen from the tangle of his curls, into the house, glad to make a 'party' out of the simple supper and a ceremony out of the lighting of Mother Cary's nightly beacon, glad to hold him up to the window to see the trees bend under the wind that came with Father Cary's predicted rain, and glad to hold his little warm body to her while she undressed him, and to hear him repeat after her, in unison with Yetta, the prayer that she was, somewhat shyly, teaching them. She was glad when Yetta claimed the privilege of her fifteen years to sit up a while longer; glad of anything that might postpone the moments when she should be alone with her own thoughts.

The storm was increasing; each gust of wind shrieked louder than the last, sending the rain against the little house in sheets that broke with a sound as of waves on a shore. Rosamund, answering Yetta's demand for a story, regaled her with the tale of Rip

The LAND *of* CONTENT

Van Winkle, and then, somewhat unwisely, with the Legend of Sleepy Hollow, so that when the girl's bedtime could no longer be put off she pleaded to stay downstairs with Timmy and herself.

But at last Rosamund must be alone with herself and the storm. At first she could not think of Eleanor's message, and what it might mean to her. She had forgotten that the summer was almost over, forgotten that Eleanor's inevitable departure must leave her alone, as far as old friends were concerned, in the mountains. She had even forgotten that she herself must return; and now she had to remember that Cecilia's clamor might begin again with any letter. The summer was over. It had warmed into growth some part of her which had laid dormant before; but, after this afternoon, she was in no mood to dwell upon that. She thought again of Eleanor, of her parting with the boy. There must, of course, be something provided for the poor little waif, and for Yetta; that would be easy enough; she had only to write a check or two. Yet, in spite of the obviousness of that way, something else, quite different, seemed to be struggling to formulate itself in her mind; for once the writing of a check did not appear to be an adequate solution.

But the sum of it all, for her, seemed to be that she was just where she had left her old self, two

The LAND *of* CONTENT

months before. The old restlessness, the old discontent, swept back upon her with accumulated force, only increased by her life here. The summer had taught her something, given her something; how much she was unwilling to admit.

Suddenly there came back to her the sound of Ogilvie's voice, when he had called her by name, out of his shame and pain; and with the memory there came the reality of his voice, only now it was muffled by the storm, and by the sound of his knocking on the door.

Startled though she was at its coming in apparent answer to her thoughts, she sprang to the door and opened it. Then, in a quick heat of shame, she realized that he was far from calling upon her.

He stood under the overhang of the upper story, water dripping from him onto the brick paving, hatless as usual, tossing the rain from his eyes. He was exceedingly far from being a beautiful figure as he stood there; rather, he seemed a creature of the storm, wind-swept, rain-soaked, forceful, insistent.

"Mother Cary!" he demanded almost before Rosamund had opened the door. "Mother Cary! Where is she?"

Rosamund drew back, as if repelled from the dripping figure. Unconsciously she had expected something else.

The LAND of CONTENT

"Mother Cary is not here," she said, coldly.

"Not here?" he cried. Then, like a man who finds himself suddenly stopped, repeating, "Not here? To-night?"

"She went to her daughter's, before the storm broke. The baby is sick."

"Then Father Cary—I must have someone!"

"He is with her," said Rosamund, and made as though she would close the door, although, if truth be told, no power on earth would have made her do so. But Ogilvie stepped, still dripping, across the threshold, while she stood before him in her dress of thin blue, silhouetted against the lamp-light.

For a moment they faced each other, again, as earlier on that day, their natures and all the difference in their training and traditions ranged in opposing forces.

The appeal of her beauty, the memory of their hours together, swept over him like the breath of a dream; but the doctor in him was uppermost.

"It's the Allen woman," he said. "That boy, six years old, came all the way to my house to tell me. Jim Allen is in the woods, and there's no telling how long she's been that way. The baby is starving; and if I don't operate *now* she will die, and the baby, too."

The words had poured out. He barely paused,

The LAND of CONTENT

hesitated only to give her a glance more piercing. Yet when he spoke again he voiced a new insistence.

"I have *got* to have help. Get on your things," he commanded.

"I?" she gasped.

"Yes, you! And quickly. I have no time to lose."

The haste of his words only made her own seem slower. "Then you will certainly have to go for someone else. You are losing time waiting for me."

He came a step or two closer. "You have got to come," he said, clearly, speaking his words very distinctly, as if trying to make himself understood beyond question. "There is no time to go for someone else. And I have got to operate on that woman at once, *at once*, or she will die." As Rosamund still stood, head up, eyes upon him coldly, he repeated: "Don't you understand? The woman will die, and then the baby will starve. . . ."

Her eyes seemed to darken; Cecilia would have recognized the sign of wrath. "Certainly I understand," she said. "But you must see that it is perfectly impossible for me—*me*—to help you! I don't know what you can be thinking of!"

"Impossible? I say you have got to help me! I can't wait for anyone else!"

"I? Help you—help you—operate—cut—oh!"

The LAND *of* CONTENT

She shrank farther back towards the table. "Oh, I think you are perfectly brutal!"

He watched her in silence for a moment, a silence that burned, so charged with meaning was it. Then he said,

"I am asking you to help me save a woman's life!"

"It would kill *me* to see it!"

He threw his hand out towards her. "Then live!" he cried. "Live on, and shield your pretty eyes from the beautiful works of the Almighty, draw your dainty skirts aside from the contamination of suffering humanity, cover your ears against the cries of those little children whose mother is dying. Dance with your friends, laugh your life away; live for yourself—yourself! My God! What kind of a thing are you? Do you call yourself a woman?"

He did not wait to see what effect his words would have upon her. He rushed across the door sill, and the door, which he drew behind him, was slammed by the wind as from the force of a blow.

For a moment she stood watching the door, lips parted, eyes opened wide in horror. It seemed as if the blood pulsing in her throat would choke her; or was it the wild hammering of her heart?

She looked around Mother Cary's little room as if she had never seen it before. Was the whole world

The LAND of CONTENT

different, or was it only herself? Was she still dreaming, or was she awake? Had he come at all, had he called her, had he—had he thrown his bitter scorn at her——?

Was that the wind? Her hand rose from her heart to her white cheek. Was that the voice of the storm, or the voice of children, children—calling—crying for——

From her frozen horror she sprang to life. She ran to the room where Tim and Yetta were. Yetta was sitting up in bed, wide-eyed.

“What went off?” she demanded, excitedly.

Rosamund was already getting into her rain-coat. “Doctor Ogilvie has been here, Yetta, and I have got to help him. Mrs. Allen is sick, and I have got to go.”

Yetta interrupted. “Was that him slammed the door? Gee! He must a been mad about some-thin’!”

But Rosamund would not be interrupted. “Hush, Yetta! Listen to me! I have got to go to Mrs. Allen’s. Do you hear?”

“My land! If you was to meet one o’ the goberlins or one o’ them fellers with their heads under their arms, Miss Rose, you’d drop down dead with fright!”

Rosamund remembered the absurdity of it afterwards, but there was no time to laugh. “Yetta! Oh,

The LAND of CONTENT

hush! Listen to me! You will not be afraid, here with Timmy, will you?"

"Land! No! I ain't afraid of anything when a door's between me an' it!"

"Father Cary will be up the mountain early!" She turned in the door of the bed-room to look back at the two her care had made comfortable; then she closed it, and went out of the other door into the storm.

IX

SHE never forgot that night. When the door of Mother Cary's house closed behind her, and she faced the wind and blinding rain, she awoke. That was the way she always thought of it—as an awakening.

The Allen house lay beyond Father Cary's pasture; she knew the way by day—down through the garden, then through the woods to the rock-ribbed clearing where the cattle were, then up, into woods again; but in the dark it was for her but a wild, instinctive rush, a stumbling over rock-broken ground, a splashing through pools of water; on through the darkness, on from one darkness to another, turning from time to time to look back at Mother Cary's light as a guide to direction. Yet on she flew, impelled by a conquering fear that drove out all lesser fears, over rough places, through woods, up the ascent of hills, running as much of the way as she could, bending against the wind that seemed trying to force her back, praying that she might find the way, praying that she might be in time.

At last, though she could never tell how she had come to it, a light gleamed faintly through the dark

The LAND *of* CONTENT

and the rain. At last—the Allen house! She tumbled to the door, paused a moment for breath, and opened it.

It was the usual one-room cabin of the mountaineer; there were strange, shelf-like beds against the farthest wall, and in a corner a wooden bedstead. It was from there that John Ogilvie looked up as she opened the door.

“Quick! That largest bottle—saturate something—anything—and hold it over her face!”

She worked with him, obeying blindly, while he struggled through the night for a woman's life, while the poor hungry baby awoke at intervals to wail its complaint from the other bed, while the storm shook the house and the rain swept down unceasingly. Once he bade her get more light. There were no more lamps; she knelt down on the hearth to blow into the flame the scraps she had gathered up in her bare hands from the wood-box; those lighted, and lacking more, somehow she broke the box itself—a task ordinarily as far beyond her strength as her imagination. It was by the light of that blaze that he finished his work, leaving Rosamund free to do what she could for the baby.

But, when at last there was time for speech, neither found anything to say. He remembered too well the brutal words he had thrown at her a few

The LAND *of* CONTENT

hours before; he could not but fear that her silence meant that she, too, was recalling them. He saw her there beside the hearth, the baby on her knees; but he saw her also in the doorway, her hair wind-blown and wet, and her eyes wide with fear and dread, determination and hope. He could have grovelled at her feet, had not her silence held him back; but speak he could not; great emotion was always to leave him inarticulate.

But as for Rosamund, she was unaware of his silence or her own. She was like a woman after her travail, who is content to lie in silence, because the purpose of the world has been revealed to her. Life—that was it—to further life, to prolong it, to minister to it! How futile was all else! How valueless were the things she had been taught to value most! Her shielded ignorance, her—her refinement—of what use were they, when they could not face such an emergency as last night's? Her money, that could have bought a hospital—what had it bought last night, when only the service of her own two hands could help to save a woman's life? The pursuits of her kind—she smiled, remembering Ogilvie's orderly haste, as unerringly he cut, and tied and sewed, while she as unfalteringly watched him, even assisted. No! For her there was nothing to say; she knew now what life was for. It was not the empty, useless existence

The LAND of CONTENT

she had known. It had a deeper meaning, a purpose worthier its Maker. It was wonderful beyond words. She had nothing to say.

Neither of them was aware that the dawn had come, until someone knocked on the door. Then Ogilvie opened it to Father Cary, and to the grayness of a still driving rain.

The stalwart old man stepped inside and looked about the cabin, at the quietly breathing woman on the bed, at Ogilvie, at Rosamund beside the fire trying to persuade the baby to take something warm from a spoon.

"So!" he said. "And where's Jim Allen?"

Ogilvie threw up both his hands, hopelessly. "Where he always is—back in the woods at one of the stills, dead drunk, like as not."

"More'n likely," Father Cary acquiesced. Then, nodding towards the bed, he asked, "What's the matter with *her*?"

"Nothing now. She would have been dead, though, if I had operated half an hour later. Lord knows how long she's been lying there. The baby's nearly dead, too—half-starved and half-poisoned by his mother's illness."

"How'd you happen to come?" the old man asked.

"The oldest boy came for me—all the way over

The LAND of CONTENT

to the Summit, and he's not six. He's at my house in bed now."

Then Father Cary crossed the room, and stood beside Rosamund, looking down at her. She met his look with a quiet smile.

"New work for *you*, ain't it?" he asked. "Ma Cary'll be real proud o' ye!"

And answering the question in her eyes, he went on, "Oh, she'll be home again in time to get dinner. Wasn't nothin' the matter with the baby; but Nancy's that nervous, an' so's Ma Cary." He chuckled. "I reckon it takes some experience and a right smart o' ca'm to be a real successful granny."

The doctor was becoming impatient. "Will you stay here with Miss Randall, Cary? I must get someone to come; she"—nodding towards the bed—"will need watching until we can find Allen."

So for an hour or so Pa Cary sat opposite Rosamund or busied himself preparing for breakfast the little food to be found in the house. The other children awoke, tumbling down backwards from the high box-bed, looking across at their mother with scared faces, and distrustfully at Rosamund.

At last Ogilvie returned, bringing Grace Tobet with him, and Rosamund was free to go home with Father Cary.

But there must first be the inevitable moment

The LAND *of* CONTENT

when she and Ogilvie should stand face to face. It happened simply enough. Grace had taken Rosamund's place beside the fire, replenished now through Father Cary's efforts in the outer shed; the old man had gone out for a last armful of wood, and Rosamund was about to take down her coat from its nail on the door.

Then, somehow, Ogilvie was standing before her. He looked at her with trembling lips; he did not dare to trust himself to speak. He could only hold out his hands.

She turned her tired face up to him, looking, searchingly, it seemed, into his eyes. Then, smiling, she laid her hands for the breath of a moment in his, and with a little gasp reached for her coat and ran out to join Father Cary.

She was glad that Eleanor's departure, and the rain, kept them apart for a few days after that. She dreaded the restraint that she thought they both must feel when they should meet; but, when the meeting came at last, there was no embarrassment at all.

Father Cary had left her at the Summit and she meant to walk back to the house on the mountain, to make the most of the first clear day after the rain. There was a little brown house, set on the brow of the hill overlooking the valley, almost opposite the mountain whence Mother Cary's light shone every

The LAND *of* CONTENT

night. Rosamund had often noticed the little place, and to-day, at the store, she had heard the men talking about it. The man who owned it had come from the city a year or so before, with his wife, to be near Doctor Ogilvie. They were young, and the young do not see very far ahead. It had seemed to them in their distress that they would have to stay there forever; they had done many things to the little house, and put into it many of the comforts they had been used to. Now the man was well, and they were going back to the city.

“Want to sell out,” the postmaster had told her. “Humph! Wouldn’t mind sellin’ out myself! Like to know who’s going to buy prop’ty up here, this time o’ year!”

So, as she approached the little house on her way home, Rosamund was busily thinking about it. Perhaps, subconsciously, the idea had been a long time growing in her mind; but when she turned the last bend in the road that hid the house from her view, a plan seemed to burst upon her with all the novelty of a revelation. She stood still, looking first at the house, then across the valley towards the place which had sheltered her all summer. She was not aware that a vehicle drawn by a familiar white horse was just turning out of a wood-road into the highway, scarcely ten yards behind her.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

But Ogilvie, in the sudden gladness of thus unexpectedly coming upon her, called out.

"Oh, good luck! Let me give you a lift, won't you?"

The embarrassment that she had been dreading was not there! They were as simply glad to see each other as two children; laughing, she took the place beside him in the buggy.

He had never looked more cheerful. "So I caught you staring into the Marvens' windows!" he accused her.

She laughed again. "I am tempted to buy that little house," she told him.

"Why don't you?" he asked, lightly. "And go there to live, and take Timmy and Yetta with you!" He smiled down at her, indulgently, as at the fancies of a child.

"That was just precisely what I was thinking of doing," she replied. "We could be perfectly comfortable there during the winter. I don't want to go back to town one bit!"

"So you could," he agreed, still in his bantering tone. "And I wouldn't stop with Tim and Yetta. I'd take in a few more. You might borrow some little Allens, or get someone to lend you an orphan asylum."

Rosamund put her head back and laughed aloud,

The LAND of CONTENT

merrily. "But I am perfectly in earnest!" she cried; and was, from that moment.

But if the doctor refused to take the idea seriously, it was quite otherwise with Mother Cary. When Rosamund disclosed to her the half-formed plan—she had come to discuss nearly everything with that fount of human wisdom—the dear soul did not seem surprised at all, but at once made a thoroughly feminine mental leap into the very middle of arrangements.

"Why, of course, dearie, it will be just splendid! And you won't need so very many furnishin's. There's some cheers up in our loft you might take, and you can have things up from the city. Yetta's learned a good deal this summer. I can bake for you for a while, till the child gets more used to the work, and I reckon you can manage the rest of it betwixt you."

"Do you suppose," Rosamund asked, "that Grace Tobet would come, too?"

Mother Cary sat down in her little low rocking chair, and laid her crutch on the brick floor of the front walk, always a sign of her settling down for a real talk. Things had been going worse and worse with the Tobets; Rosamund and Yetta went down almost daily, but beyond their friendly visits there seemed little they could do. The Government's sus-

The LAND of CONTENT

pitions were centering on Joe, the big, born leader of rough elements, and on his band of four or five other men, who would follow him to death or worse. Jim Allen was one; but now, repentant and sobered by the baby's death, he was at home nursing his wife. Grace had sped through the woods in the night to warn Joe and his followers more than once; yet even to Ogilvie she denied any knowledge of Joe's business.

"It's squirrels he's after," she said, "and sometimes drink; all this talk of moonshine's jest foolishness. I'd know it ef 'twas so. It ain't so!"

"Well, Mrs. Tobet," the doctor replied, "your squirrel stew would not be to my liking! Better keep the lid on the pot while it's cooking!"

He saw too many evidences of the moonshine's work to believe her; but he had seen Joe Tobet come home, and he honored Grace, too familiar with human nature to marvel at her faithfulness. Mother Cary alone knew all that Grace Tobet knew; all secrets were safe in her kind old heart, and even from Pap she hid this one, for Father Cary was not one of those who hold councils of compromise with the Evil One. Therefore, when Rosamund suggested Grace Tobet, Mother Cary sat down to think it out.

After a few minutes' silent pondering, she said, "Honey, I've never been one to advise the partin' of husband and wife! Howsomever, if there's any good

The LAND of CONTENT

left in Joe Tobet, it may be the surest way o' bringin' him back to straight ways o' livin', ef we can coax Grace to leave him for a while."

"I'm afraid I can't give a thought to Joe's salvation," Rosamund declared. "But Grace—oh, she's too fine to be left there! I should like to give her one winter of comfort!"

"Well, you haven't got a holt of her yet," Mother Cary reminded her, "an' it wouldn't be but half comfort for her, the outside half, anyways, away from her man. But I can't see what anybody could do better than to keep little Tim and Yetta up here out o' harm's way, and maybe save Grace Tobet an' Joe, too. Land's sake, dearie, you must be quite well off!"

It seemed to come to Mother Cary suddenly, and was the first spark of curiosity Rosamund had ever known her to show. Until now her wisdom had seemed all-embracing; but that a young woman, that Rosamund, who had lived so quietly in her house all summer, could carry out a suddenly formed plan of buying a house and sheltering three people—this was evidently quite outside of her experience. She looked up with unwonted surprise in her face. Rosamund bent and kissed the wrinkled pink cheek.

"Dear, dear Mother Cary," she said, "I am so well off that I could probably buy every house at the Summit, and build as many more! I am so well off

The LAND of CONTENT

that I have never in all my life, until this summer, had a chance to find out how well off I am! I am so well off that I did not know how poor I have been, nor how much people can need the wretched mere money, nor how very, very little it can really do! I have only begun to find out what life is made of, and so I'm not well off at all!"

Tears came into her eyes as she spoke, and she turned her head away; but Mother Cary's hand was stretched towards her, instantly. Presently she said, in the low tone which was the tenderest and sweetest of all:

"Dearie child, when the young folks come an' tell me things like you're tellin' me now, I reckon there ain't anybody in the world as well off as me! An' I'll tell you jest what it is makes you do it—it's because I'm so happy! An' I'll tell you jest what makes me so happy. I let Pap take keer o' me, an' I try to take keer o' him an' jest as many other folks as I can! That's the whole of it!" After a pause she added, "You're goin' to do jest the same as me, both in keering for someone, an' in bein' took keer of!"

Rosamund's eyes opened wide; she paled a little and pressed her hand against her trembling lips. "I don't know," she whispered. "I'm afraid! Oh, I'm afraid!"

The LAND *of* CONTENT

Mother Cary patted the hand she held, and knew too much to speak. Their thoughts, in the silence, wandered far; came back and dwelt upon the things that were, the things to be; there is no way of knowing whether they went hand in hand, but after a while Mother Cary said:

“Dearie, I wouldn’t tell him, if I was you, about—about all you have, the money an’—you know!—I wouldn’t tell the doctor yet a while!”

Rosamund drew her breath sharply, and her face flamed; she was too startled to answer, but in a moment she left her place on the bench and knelt beside the old woman, hiding her face on the knees where so many had found comfort. Mother Cary smoothed her hair, and after a while began to talk, almost as if to herself.

“There’s a friend o’ mine sometimes spends her summers up around here; she’s married to a eye doctor—that’s how come Yetta got sent up here to me. Her husband knew Doctor Ogilvie down in the city. She told me there never was one they thought more of, down there; they said he found out more about nerves than anybody else in the world, and he used to work day and night and in between times, trying to discover more. They said there never was such a one with little child’en; he could almost make ’em over new, seemed like. They said he never cared

The LAND of CONTENT

whether folks could pay him or not for what he did—all he cared for was the curin' of 'em. I can well believe it, too, for many's the time I see him almost starved without knowin' what's the matter with him, and he ain't a mite particler about his clo'es. Well, he worked an' he worked; and one day my friend's husband, that was one o' his friends, went into his little room where he kept his bottles and things, and found him layin' on the floor. They thought he surely would die, but praise the Lord, that wasn't to be; only, he had to give up his work down in the big horspital. I often think on what that must 'a' been to him. I reckon it must 'a' been worse than it would be for Pap to give up a raisin' them white hogs o' his he's so proud of. Anyway, he come up here, an' he got well! And now he says he hasn't got time to go back there again—there's too much for him to do up here all the time. So he jest rides around the country with that Rosy horse. Somebody asked him once why he didn't buy an automobile. He said for one thing he hadn't the money for it; and for another, he needed White Rosy to remind him where he was going!"

Mother Cary stopped to laugh; Rosamund raised her head, with an answering smile that was half tears.

"Land sakes," Mother Cary went on, "I do believe if it wasn't for Rosy he'd sometimes forget to

The LAND *of* CONTENT

come home! When they get to one o' the houses where he visits, Rosy stops and turns her head around; ef he don't say anything to her, there she stands; but if he tells her he don't have to get out there that day, Rosy jogs along to the next place! I'm real fond o' humans, but sometimes I do wish't they all knew as much as the doctor's Rosy!"

This time Rosamund joined in the laugh. But the old woman had more to tell. "Time was when I might 'a' wondered how come he stays on here, him bein' the great doctor he is; but I'm so old now that I know too much to wonder about anything any more! There's folks in this world that never can find any work to do, and there's folks that makes work for themselves, and then again there's folks that are so busy with the work right at hand that they never get time to find out whether they're workin' or not. That's Doctor Ogilvie's kind. He's so busy workin' up here in the mountings, that he never stops to think about whether he is doing the work he likes best or not; it's just work he has to do, because it's here to be done, and that's all there is to it for him. He works so hard at it, inside his own head, that he forgets most everything else. Land, I remember the time he sat up with me all night long, workin' over Milly Grate's baby that had the membranious croup

The LAND *of* CONTENT

—diphthery, he called it. Come mornin', an' he told Milly the baby'd get well, he suddenly went out and sat right down on the doorstep; come to find out, he'd brought two babies into the world the day before and driven twenty-two miles and walked about a dozen—and forgotten to take a bite to eat! Another time, somebody sent a little boy over the mounting for him in a hurry; he was at a house where a man had broke his leg, and White Rosy was waitin' for him at the gate; but when he heard how bad off the little girl was he'd been sent for, didn't he jest set out and run all the way there, forgettin' that there was such a thing as a wagon to ride in, and White Rosy still a waitin'!

“ And he boards with the Widder Speers, where it ain't likely she can make him very comfortable, she bein' well past eighty; but he found out soon after he come up here that she would have to be moved to—the place where nobody likes to go!—she not havin' any support; so he boards there, an' she doesn't have to leave her home, that her husband built for her when they was married, and where her only son died. You might hunt the world over, honey-bird, without findin' any better man than Doctor Ogilvie! But, somehow or other, ef I was you, I wouldn't let on to him that I had as much money as you say you

The LAND of CONTENT

have. Money's a dreadful stumblin'-block to some people! And you never can tell which way men folks'll jump!"

It had been long since Rosamund, trained in self-control as she had been, was so keenly aware of intense embarrassment. Her first impulse was to feel affront at Mother Cary's taking so much for granted in her relations with the doctor; but no one could really be angry with Mother Cary. She was abashed that the old woman had divined more than she herself had been aware of; and then there arose the doubt that she had so often felt of the doctor's personal interest in herself or her affairs. She yielded to the maiden's inevitable longing for reassurance.

"What makes you think," she whispered, her cheek against Mother Cary's hand, "what makes you think that he—would be—interested?"

"Darlin'!" Mother Cary cried, "John Ogilvie thinks a heap o' you—but he ain't got hardly a suspicion of it yet—any more than you know how much you're goin' to care for him!"

Then, with the usual coincidence, the object of their talk came into view, driving White Rosy toward the little green gate, Yetta on one side of him and Tim on the other; they waved to the two in front of the house, but Rosamund sprang to her feet and fled indoors.

X

ROSAMUND awoke the next morning with her mind joyously full of her new plans; but it was little Tim who suggested that which crowned them. Tim was always the first member of the household, after Father Cary, to go out of doors in the mornings; to-day he brought back a tight handful of stemless blossoms to present to Rosamund. Dewy and rosy-cheeked, he had never before appeared as much the baby as on this morning, standing in front of her with his feet apart, holding up his floral offering.

“It was all ve pretty flowers 'at was awake,” he announced. “Here—I 'ikes you!”

“Land! I hope he ain't been in my geraniums!” said Mother Cary, from the stove; but Rosamund grasped the chubby hand, with its blossoms, and kissed it.

“They are beautiful, Tim! I 'ike you, too! And Tim, how would you like to live with me all the time?”

He stared at her for a moment. “Oh! O-o-oh! Is you gonin' to 'dopt me?”

Mother Cary, with an exclamation, turned quickly to watch the two; Rosamund met her eyes over the boy's head. Her plan was coming to birth.

The LAND of CONTENT

“Do you want me to, Tim?” she asked.

The child's lips began to quiver. Then he dumped himself down upon the floor, and howled. “Want my White Lady!” he cried. “Want to 'dopt my White Lady!”

Swiftly he was lifted in Rosamund's arms. “Good for you, Tim! Good for you, old man! I'm glad you know your own mind!” she cried.

She gathered him up, threw herself into a big rocking chair, set him astride on her knees and rocked him wildly back and forth, down until his curls nearly touched the floor, then up again, up in a bubble of laughter and kisses, Timmy forgetting his tears to shout with glee, down and up again, down and up, the child screaming with joy. Father Cary and Yetta coming in from the barn to breakfast, stood in the doorway laughing, Yetta wondering a little at Miss Rose's unwonted exuberance. Mother Cary had already taken her place at the table, and was laughing in sympathy with them.

When Rosamund stopped, breathless, with aching arms, Tim still demanded “More! More! do it 'den!”

“Land's sakes, honey-bird, what ails ye?” Mother Cary cried. “I never suspected you *could* be so lively!”

For reply Rosamund looked at Yetta. “When

The LAND of CONTENT

Tim adopts the 'White Lady,' and I go to live with them, will you come, too, Yetta?" she asked.

"Is that a conundrum? I ain't much good at riddles!" Yetta declared.

Rosamund laughed; she would have laughed at anything to-day. "Not a riddle—an answer, Yetta! You and Timmy, Mrs. Reeves and I, are all going to live together in the brown house at the Summit! What do you think of that?"

"Sho', now! 'That's the very ticket!" said Mother Cary. "How-come you didn't think o' Mis' Reeves yesterday, lamb? But—ain't she held by that Mis' Hetherbee?"

"Yes, she is; but I think we can persuade Mrs. Hetherbee to let her come."

"Gee! I'd be glad to get away from that old one, if 'twas me!" said Yetta, in an aside which the others thought best to ignore.

"Pap," said Mother Cary, "if so be you'll put the harness on Ben, Miss Rose and me'll drive over an' begin cleanin' the house this mornin'!"

The old man put down his knife and fork, looked from his wife to Miss Randall, and back again. "It do beat all how you women-folks jump into the middle o' things the minute you get started," he said. "The house ain't even empty yet!"

"Land, I forgot all about them Marvens," said

The LAND *of* CONTENT

Mother Cary. "No matter! It gives us all the more time to get good an' ready, honey-bird!"

Rosamund very soon began to realize that she needed time. First of all, she sent for her man of business, an excellent person who lacked imagination, and was later found to disapprove of purchases of little brown houses or of anything else that could never bring interest or increase in value. But his disapproval of that investment was as nothing to the objections he made to another. It was not until Rosamund reminded him that her twenty-fifth birthday had come and gone, releasing the Randall property from all trust and making it now her own, and declared that if he refused to obey her directions she would be obliged to ask someone else to look after her interests, that he reluctantly consented to it.

Then there was the delicate matter of bringing Eleanor to consent to her plans.

DARLING ELEANOR [she wrote]: I have decided that Timmy *must* be adopted. I make the announcement first of all, because I know that if I did not mention him at once, you would skip all the first part of my letter until you found his name, and only read on from there. And I have a proposition which needs to be presented right end foremost. So—Tim *must* be adopted. He has his heart set upon it; and he has turned out to be such a darling little boy. He cannot

The LAND of CONTENT

be sent back to the Charities, to be looked over and refused by people who would not appreciate him, anyway. Doctor Ogilvie says that he must stay here another year, if he is to be made entirely well; but unless he has the best of care after that, and is made happy, he will not live to be the good and useful man we should like to see him. Doctor Ogilvie is a great believer in the curative powers of happiness; and you know he is a very good doctor. Well—I have already made over to Tim some money, to be held in trust for him until he is twenty-five. The entire interest is to be given, until said time, to the adopted parent of said Tim, according to said agreement, for the use and maintenance of said parent and said Tim, the entire amount to be paid over to him twenty-one years after the execution of the deed of trust. I do hope you are properly impressed by that legal phraseology, Eleanor darling. I put in all the 'saids' I could, just as the lawyers do. I want you to see what a fine and wonderful thing it is for Timmy, Timmy the waif, to be the subject of anything so impressive; and the sum of money I have given him will provide simple comfort for him and his parent-by-adoption; only, of course, I must be sure that his parent is a person whom I can trust to spend it as it should be spent, and so to bring up the boy that he will be worthy of his—let's call it his inheritance—when he finally receives it. So it has all been done subject to one condition. Unless that condition should be fulfilled, the child will have to go back to the Charities; I had a great discussion about it all with

The LAND of CONTENT

Mr. Leeds, my lawyer; and he only consented to draw up the paper subject to that condition. It is that—oh, Eleanor, don't say 'no'!—it is that *you* will adopt little Tim, let him fill that empty place in your heart, teach him to be a good man, and—I shall spoil it if I write another word, dear White Lady, sweet White Lady, White Lady that Timmy loves! See this blur, Eleanor—it is where he has pressed a kiss, to send to his White Lady. R.

To this Eleanor replied, "I have your letter. I must think." Rosamund tried to be satisfied with that for a while; but as the days passed and Eleanor wrote nothing more, and as Cecilia must be persuaded and her trustees interviewed, she sent her sister a night letter, begging her to join her in New York immediately. She told Ogilvie and the others that she was going to buy furniture for the house, which was true enough.

There was that in the interview with the lawyers that put Cecilia into a most complaisant state of mind; when she thought of Rosamund's having put the greater part of the Randall income at her disposal she could not find it in her heart to show disapproval of anything else that Rosamund might choose to do. The only protest she made was at the gift to the little waif.

"Pure Quixotism, my dear, never gains you a thing. It is the most utter madness I ever heard of."

The LAND *of* CONTENT

“Well, it will gain Timmy something, and Eleanor something; and you know very well, Cecilia, that I shall never miss it.”

“We won’t discuss it,” Cecilia said, “but I am sure that not even Colonel Randall would have done anything so wildly impulsive.”

Rosamund could find very little to say to that; she knew well enough that nothing but her faith in Eleanor could make it seem anything but a hazardous experiment. Mother Cary had seen nothing but good in the plan, but here in New York idealism seemed out of place; what had appeared fine there looked foolish here. She was beginning to doubt the excellence of her plan, when word came from Eleanor that Mrs. Hetherbee was back in town. Rosamund called at once, presenting Cecilia’s cards with her own, as the first move in the little social campaign that she foresaw. Eleanor, in her white gown, looked strangely out of place in Mrs. Hetherbee’s florid apartment that overlooked the Hudson, and had every splendor known to apartments, even to an up-and-down-stairs of its own.

Eleanor kissed her, then held her off for a long look.

“Rose, Rose! How can you tempt me so?” she cried. “It is only a scheme for giving the money to me!”

The LAND of CONTENT

“Eleanor, tell me the truth. Did you and Tim fall in love with each other at first sight, or not?”

“Ah! Little Tim!”

“Precisely! Little Tim! Would you deprive him of such an opportunity as this?”

“Oh, you would never take the money away from him, Rose—now?”

“But it is not his, yet! It never can be, unless you will take him for your son—for your own little boy, Eleanor! Think of it!”

“I do think of it! I haven’t thought of anything else.”

“Except, my dear, that you, too, will benefit by the plan! So you are trying to refuse. Don’t be selfish, Eleanor!”

“Selfish? To deny myself what I want most in the world?”

“You and Tim seem to know your own minds! When I asked him if *I* should adopt him, he plumped down on the floor and yelled for his White Lady.”

“Rose! Don’t make it so hard!”

“It is you who are making it hard! I have grown very fond of Timmy, and I should hate, just hate to see him go back to the Charities. Think of the poor mite being scrubbed up and dressed in a clean striped gingham, and brought out to be in-

The LAND of CONTENT

spected by possible adopters! Think how he will feel when they say, 'Oh, I don't think we want a little boy with hip disease!' or 'Haven't you any—er—prettier children?'"

"Oh, Rose!" Eleanor put her hands over her eyes, while Rosamund drew her down to one of Mrs. Hetherbee's Louis Quinze settees.

"Eleanor," she said, seriously, "let us admit, if you want to, that I am giving the money to you. Of course it will be practically your own until you have had Tim twenty-one years. I have such faith in what you will do with him that I give the whole amount to Tim, outright, after then. I have such faith in the son he will be to you, that I am willing to let him have the joy of taking care of his mother after that time. Do you suppose I would give him money, if he were going to a stranger? Cecilia calls me Quixotic, but I assure you I am not as far gone as all that."

Eleanor was weakening. "It is a great deal of money, Rosamund," she said.

"Oh, if that's all that's troubling you! It does not seem much to me. Besides, I owe the world something!"

"Ah!" Eleanor put her hand to the girl's cheek, turning her face until she could look into her eyes. "Rose, what else has the summer taught you?"

The LAND *of* CONTENT

Rosamund's eyes widened a little. "We have no time to talk of that now while Timmy is waiting for his mother!"

"His mother! Oh, how you tempt me, Rose!"

"Listen, Eleanor! I have bought that little house at the Summit that the Marvens lived in. Mr. Marven is cured, and they have gone back to the city. I am going to live in it this winter, with you and Tim and Yetta; I have already sent down to Augusta for my old Mammy Susan and her husband, Matt, to meet me there two weeks from now. The Charities will not let you or me or anyone else adopt Timmy without a year's probation first. Come with me for this winter, and see how we all feel about it when the year is out. Come as my housekeeper. Put away your selfish pride, White Lady—and let your salary be what Timmy's interest would be if you had already adopted him. A year will help us all to wisdom, perhaps."

Eleanor, with head bent, and hands clasped in her lap, thought for a long moment.

"I am asking you to take too much responsibility upon yourself, I suppose!" Rosamund said at last, slyly watching her friend. Eleanor turned at once, swift to deny.

"How can you insinuate such a thing! Are they open, at the Charities building, in the afternoon?"

The LAND of CONTENT

Rosamund threw her arms about the White Lady's neck in a half-strangling embrace. "You darling! Yes, we will go there at once! I told them we'd be there this afternoon!"

"Rose!" Eleanor cried. "How could you?"

"Oh, I knew you could never in the world send Tim back to them!"

They forgot Mrs. Hetherbee until they had signed the provisional papers of adoption for the child, and were on their way uptown in Cecilia's new limousine, which she had loaned Rosamund for the afternoon. It was disconcerting to find that Mrs. Hetherbee had no intention of releasing Eleanor; but Cecilia allowed herself to be persuaded to join in the campaign. When at last Cecilia sent for a society reporter who had never before succeeded in penetrating to her, and gave out the interesting item that she was to dine, *en famille*, with Mrs. Hetherbee on the twenty-second, the little lady capitulated, even adding her blessing.

To Cecilia, admiration was an incense always acceptable; Mrs. Hetherbee amused her, and one had to do something to amuse one's self. There was nothing exciting in Rosamund's shopping expeditions. The city might have been deserted, so few of their own friends were in town. Some lingered at their country places, others were in Lenox for the hunting, or still

The LAND of CONTENT

abroad. The effect of New York's social emptiness was to draw more closely together than was possible during the busier season the comparative few who for one reason or another were in town. There was more time for lunching together and going afterwards for a spin toward the Westchester hills or over to one of the Long Island golf courses; and for one of the week-ends, which were torrid with the humidity of late September, they stood out to sea aboard one of the steam yachts that were beginning to bring their owners back to the North River. Sometimes a longing for her mountains would sweep so strongly over Rosamund that she would have a sense of unreality, as if she were in a strange land, among strange people, instead of having just returned to the familiar noise and glitter of New York.

One morning, when they had been shopping about for things that refused to be discovered, and clothes which should be simple enough for the brown house, and Cecilia had refused to go farther until she had had something to eat, they went to their favorite lunching place, now curiously deserted except by people who seemed to have come from another world, who spoke in strange accents and stared about them as if still under the spell of the man with the megaphone. In a corner of the overdecorated room near a window which was still shielded by awning and

The LAND of CONTENT

window boxes from the Avenue's glare, Cecilia sank back, weary, and frankly out of sorts with everything.

"It is a most horrible time of year for shopping," she said, after she had ordered their luncheon with great precision. "There is not a thing left in the shops. I wonder what they do with the clothes that were left over? Does somebody wear them, or do they just throw them out, or what? Or is it because you are hunting for such queer things, Rosamund?"

Rosamund laughed. "But they won't be queer in the mountains, Cecilia," she said.

"I am glad I shall not have to look at them," Mrs. Maxwell replied. "But if you are going to do the peculiar, I suppose you may as well be consistently peculiar all the way along. Only, don't expect me to like it, nor approve of it; and don't think I'm encouraging you in it. I am going about with you because someone has to; I think you are foolish, *very*, and I really do *NOT* believe even Colonel Randall would have approved of your going off like this!"

Hunger and fatigue had worn on poor Cecilia's nerves; but if she had dreamed of having any other audience than her sister, the scolding would have been subdued. Flood and Pendleton, finishing their luncheon in a distant corner, had seen the two and made

The LAND *of* CONTENT

their ways towards them. The sharpness of Cecilia's tone seemed to amuse Marshall.

"Dear me, Cecilia," he said, so close behind her that she fairly jumped, while Rosamund smiled, "what's going off?"

Cecilia's eyes looked dangerous, and Flood, laughing, came to the rescue. "Come off with us, won't you?" he asked, so genially that for the first time Rosamund felt some warmth of response to his smile. "We thought of running up Westchester way for the afternoon; won't you come with us?"

His lover's quick perception told him that Rosamund was not averse to the interruption of the *tête-à-tête*; and he looked at her rather than at Cecilia for response. "There's a bit of woods back of Pocantico that always reminds me of those Virginia places where the leaves remain pale green, and the sunlight comes through and touches the ferns; *you* know!"

His own eloquence rather abashed him; but Rosamund's tired face flushed; his words recalled to her the very scent of the woods; suddenly, there overlooking the Avenue, amid the vibrating undertone of noises, in the place of all others where the wealth of the metropolis and its cosmopolitanism that is unlike any other cosmopolitanism manifests itself most impressively, she was homesick for the mountains and

The LAND *of* CONTENT

her friends there. She could have cried out with longing; and Flood's offer of a glimpse of woods was to her what the blossom is to the man in a hospital.

"Oh, yes!" she said, leaning towards him with a little air of eagerness. "Oh, yes, do take us! I'd rather get out to the woods than do anything else in the world this afternoon!"

Flood's face reddened deeply with the satisfaction of having scored at last. He and Pendleton drew up chairs and chatted while the two women disposed of their skillfully combined luncheons.

"I say, Flood, make her promise not to desert us again," cried Pendleton.

"It is rather brave of you, Marshall, to talk about desertions!" Cecilia remarked.

Pendleton grinned. "I haven't deserted you, Cecilia," he said. "I retreated! You know I'm afraid of you, Cecilia, when you're in a temper."

Flood was beginning to look distressed, but Rosamund smiled at him. "Let them squabble, Mr. Flood! I want to tell you about Timmy!"

Flood's look brightened. "Ah! The little chap we bumped into! Yes! And do tell me about Ogilvie. Didn't you find him a good fellow?"

She told him of her plans for the child and for

The LAND *of* CONTENT

her winter; Flood listened, saying little. It put him to shame that she should be doing everything for the two waifs, but her doing so only set her on a higher throne in the heaven of his longing. So intent was he on listening to every word, catching every intonation, watching every fleeting expression, that he was unaware of her not answering his question about Ogilvie.

At last Flood was driving his own car northward out of the city. A hope that fortune would continue further to smile upon him had prompted his asking a third man, who came up to speak to them, to join their party, so that he could release his chauffeur for the afternoon; and it was either an undefined wish to be rid of Cecilia for a few hours, or else a latent sense of gratitude, which prompted Rosamund to take her place beside him, smiling divinely—or so he fondly thought—at him, and roguishly at Cecilia and her attendant swains. Cecilia thoroughly enjoyed having two men to herself, especially as Marshall had been none too faithful since their parting in Virginia, and the situation offered an opportunity for discipline. The third man was benignly unaware of complications, and Rosamund openly laughed at Pendleton's expression of disgust.

They had passed out of the place side by side, while Flood went ahead to see to the car. "What's

The LAND of CONTENT

the matter with its little nose?" Rosamund laughed at Pendleton. "All out of joint?"

"You are perfectly disgusting, Rosamund," he replied in a most matter-of-fact tone, quite as if he were saying the sun was warm or the car was there. "Your manners have become contaminated, and your complexion has suffered, and you are a most disagreeable person. I hope you'll be stout before you are thirty! There!"

Rosamund's laugh was so frankly merry that Cecilia turned on a quick impulse of repression. Rosamund ought to know better than to laugh aloud in the door of a restaurant! But Flood was beside them, the other man might misunderstand a sisterly admonition, and Pendleton's raised eyebrows of disgust quite satisfied her. She allowed herself to be helped into the tonneau, happy in her own situation.

Flood knew better than to attempt small talk; he divined that he could better make himself felt by saying nothing than by saying the wrong thing. They passed swiftly northward out of the city, following upland roads that gave enchanting glimpses of the river and of nearer gardens; after an hour or so he brought his car to slow speed. They were beyond Sleepy Hollow, in woods of new growth, ferny depths, scarcely touched by sunlight, roadsides where pale asters set themselves like stars.

The LAND of CONTENT

“Isn't it like Virginia?” Flood asked.

Rosamund only nodded; but presently she almost whispered, “I love it! Oh, I love it!”

“You are really going to spend the winter there?” Flood asked.

“Yes,” she told him. “It somehow seems like home to me.”

He knew that he must move carefully into her thoughts. “I understand how that can be,” he said, after a pause. “There was a place in Idaho that used to make me choke every time I passed it; I never knew why, until one day an English fellow happened to say as we rode by, ‘Jove, there must be trout in that brook!’ Then I knew it made me homesick, because every boy has something in him that makes him want to fish. I had wanted to, worst sort, when I was a youngster—though I was born in an inland city, and never had a chance to. It just made me homesick for the boyhood I ought to have had!”

Rosamund looked at him in amazement. Subtlety and imagination from Flood she had never foreseen; her own imagination was fired at once, and her face flushed a little with shame at what she had thought of him before. Flood looked straight ahead, but he was more keenly aware of the girl beside him than she of him. His heart was pounding as if he were setting out on a race; and indeed he beheld a

The LAND of CONTENT

stake before him as clearly as ever in his life. She answered, and he knew that he had scored; at last he had made her aware of him!

So well had they progressed by the time they had got back to town that he felt he could dare to say, before he left her, "I want to know those Maryland and Virginia woods of yours better, myself."

He wondered afterwards whether he had said too much.

XI

AFTER the Westchester afternoon there were two dinners with Flood as host; and do what she would, she could not altogether escape his daily, almost hourly attentions, without wounding his feelings and her own. He did nothing she might not accept without in the least seeming to bind herself by any obligation; the very intensity of his love urged him to caution. But when he suggested to Cecilia that, since her sister had decided to go down by train, he should perhaps be going as far as Washington on the same day, he would have divined Cecilia better if he had not been so absorbed in his dreams of Rosamund; for Mrs. Maxwell's ambitions had enlarged since early summer, and she did not hesitate to divulge his plan. Rosamund was to have taken the Congressional; instead, she slipped away at nine o'clock; so anxious was she to put distance between herself and Flood, that she would not even wait for Eleanor.

On the way down, she wondered at something in Cecilia's expression when she had made known her intention of running away from Flood's companionship, but there was too much else in her mind to permit of her spending much thought upon those she had just

The LAND of CONTENT

left; there was a warmth in her heart as of the traveler's returning to the land of his affection. She had called New York her home for most of her life, and lived in the mountains three months; yet behind her she left little that she loved, and before her lay smiling fields of imagination; and she found the vision sweet. She planned the placing of the furniture in the little house, made out a list of the things that should go in each room, and wondered what she had forgotten. She was carrying little presents back with her, and she took them out of her bag, opened their boxes to make sure they were quite right, put them back into their wrappings, and with the pencil on her chatelaine wrote messages on each. Only for Ogilvie she had no gift; she had spent more time in hunting something for him than in choosing her dining-room furniture, and had come away with—nothing! There was really nothing in all New York that she could take back to the doctor!

When he met her at the little station in the October darkness of early evening, she looked about for Yetta and Tim.

“I thought you would bring the children to welcome me!” she exclaimed, and was glad that she had it to say.

But the doctor, who was walking beside her with her small hand bag, only said, quietly, “No, you

The LAND *of* CONTENT

didn't!" and Rosamund's cheeks burned as he helped her to her place behind White Rosy.

He asked her about her days in the city, but she had little to say of them; what interested her now was the new home she was going to make. As they approached it she peered through the darkness at the little brown cottage, and they stopped for a moment to make sure that Mother Cary's light could be seen from there. She told him that Mrs. Reeves was going to be with her, and that she had arranged with the Charities to keep Timmy for a while longer; of the possible adoption she said nothing, having bound Eleanor also to silence, ignoring the question in his eyes. When she spoke of her hope of having Grace live with them, the doctor's face became grave.

"It would be the best thing in the world for Grace, in one way, and perhaps for you; but—I am not thinking of anything specific—but Joe Tobet, if angered, might be a dangerous enemy. If he should resent Grace's defection, and blame it on you——"

Rosamund laughed. "Oh, but I am not in the least afraid of any Joe Tobets, you know!" she said. "What on earth could he do to me?"

"I suppose you mean what could a man of his class do to injure a woman of yours?"

Her face flushed a little. "Well, what if I do?"

"I think you'd find that he is unaware of class

The LAND of CONTENT

distinctions. He certainly would not regard them. He might be vindictive; he might make all sorts of trouble for you, and is sure to for Grace."

"Oh, but that's just the point! I want to protect her from him!"

"It is not your place to!" But then he turned towards her, and she knew he smiled through the darkness. "Play Lady Bountiful, if you will, but do take my advice and let poor Grace work out her own salvation."

She had no answering smile. "Oh," she said, "I thought you were above such phrases."

"Well, I thought so, too; but I'm not above anything when it's a question of danger to—you."

The slight deepening of his tone was enough to make her hold her breath; but she would not let emotion affect her desire to make her intention clear to him.

"I do not believe there is any danger," she said, "but if there is I think I cannot regard it. I—I am not sure I can make you understand—but I want to! It is not just an idle whim that makes me stay here this winter; it is not because I am tired of other things, things I've always had. I have been restless, I confess, but it is not restlessness that has made me decide to stay here. I have no theories of life. I'm afraid I've rather scorned the people who have; but

The LAND of CONTENT

somehow I know that I have something to do here. I cherish the belief that I have. I have never had any special thing to do, before, you see! So even if I knew that there was danger in my living in that little brown house, and having poor Grace with me, I should ignore the danger, because—well, because there *is* something for me to do here, and I am going to try to do it.”

They were down in the valley by this time, Mother Cary's lamp twinkling far above them; there was light enough from the starlit sky for her to see that he had taken off his old cap, worn out of deference to her arrival, and that he ran his fingers backward through his hair, as always when he was troubled. He did not reply until they turned into the shadow of the wooded road and Rosy was climbing the last half mile of their drive.

“God knows, there's work a-plenty for every comer,” he said. “It is not for me to tell you to keep out of it. But I hadn't thought of it in that way—for you.”

“Perhaps I ought to tell you,” she said, “that I can help in another way. I have heard Mother Cary talk about the people farther back in the mountains—the people *you* see, but that only come out, she says, when the ‘summer folks’ are gone. Grace has told me about them, too. I—I have some money at my

The LAND *of* CONTENT

disposal—I know where I can get a good deal. I thought perhaps you might—and Grace—use it in some way—you would know how, wouldn't you?"

The thought of her deception, if such it was, made her hesitate in her speech; but her disappointment was quick and keen that he did not at once accept her suggestion. When at last he spoke, his voice sounded tired, and she did not understand his answer until she had pondered it that night in her own room at Mother Cary's.

"I am afraid," he said, "that even with what you think is a good deal, we should need another miracle of the loaves and fishes."

XII

IN the weeks before they moved into the cottage, there were moments when life presented itself to Rosamund in more difficult guise than she had dreamed it ever wore. Hitherto, it had been easy enough for her to take up her abode in one place or another, as fancy led her; in New York, in Georgia, in Europe, there were always people to smooth the way—servants to make everything ready and comfortable, mother or sister or one person or another to set in motion the many wheels of the household clock-work. She had never given a thought to the machinery of life; it had seemed as simple as to breathe the free air. Not even Cecilia's warnings had touched upon the rudimentary difficulties she found she had to meet. Before the furniture arrived, there was the first cleaning of the little house to be done, and no one to do it! The summer people and their servants had departed; the hotels were closed; the mountaineers held themselves haughtily aloof from domestic service. Eleanor would have known, but Mrs. Hetherbee kept her from day to day; and Aunt Sue was taking her own time in leaving Georgia. Grace Tobet and

The LAND of CONTENT

Yetta were always ready to do what they could, but they were as untrained as Rosamund herself in the methods of doing things as she had been used to having them. Yet they were the only ones she could find to help her, and she spent her days in a toil so unaccustomed as to leave her breaking with fatigue. She was ashamed to find how inadequate she was for such elemental things; and disgust at her own limitations, added to aching fatigue of body, left her little able to stand against the opposition she was beginning to encounter from everyone.

Pa Cary, gentlest of souls, became set in disapproval as firmly as the doctor; and some undivulged, disquieting information increased Ogilvie's first distrust of the plan. At last even Mother Cary somewhat shamefacedly agreed with them.

"I don't know as it wouldn't be better to shut up the house and stay right here with us, honey," she said. "Pap keeps tellin' me it ain't safe for ye there alone, jest women and children. I reckon that colored man wouldn't skeer anybody off. There's rough people in the mountings. They're used to folks summerin' here; but Pap says, what with all this talk of the Gov'ment's men bein' around, some are sayin' you know too much about the doin's o' this part of the country."

Rosamund knew the futility of expressing her in-

The LAND *of* CONTENT

dignation. She only felt that her die was cast, arrangements irrevocably made, that she must go on. Surely it was innocent enough to spend a winter in the mountains, to keep a waif of a girl out of harm's way, and give healing happiness to a child and a beloved woman. That her heart held other motive only the secret flaming of her cheeks attested. She told herself that the mountain people could not be so foolish as to disbelieve their own senses, and determined to prove herself to them. In time they must come to believe in her honesty and sincerity of purpose, in her friendship for them and her loyalty. It was largely their distrust of the world beyond their close horizon that held them in bondage to their own passions. To enlighten them, to free them, would be well worth while for anyone. She said as much to Ogilvie, who nevertheless continued to shake his head and warn her.

With the departure of the last "foreigner" the mountaineers were more frequently seen. During the summer Rosamund and Yetta had walked miles on the strange, dimly marked paths through the woods, paths as vague and deserted as if trodden only by timid wild feet trembling towards secret drinking places; never had they met another soul upon them. But now, occasionally, they encountered lank women or timid children, who peered with half-frightened

The LAND of CONTENT

eyes out of the depths of slat bonnets, and sometimes said "howdy" in passing. The Allen children no longer ran away at sight of her, and their mother, now well enough to be about the house, watched eagerly for Rosamund's visits; she had hopes of making more friends among the women, through Mrs. Allen and Grace Tobet. Several times, too, Mother Cary had visitors; and a little school in the valley drew children from the hillsides in varying numbers. As she went back and forth between the little brown house and the Carys', the people she passed stared at her curiously; the women, she thought, were not unfriendly, but the men seemed distrustful and surly.

"Why do they look at me in that way?" she asked Grace Tobet, on an afternoon when they were hastening homeward in the twilight. "The men all look at me as if I were some hateful thing—a spy, perhaps, or a—a snake! It hurts me to have them look at me in that way! No one ever did before! I don't deserve it!"

But before Grace could reply a thing happened that hurt Rosamund far more, that shook her to the depths of her pride and courage. Something struck her upon the arm, something that stung and bruised—a stone, thrown from the wood-side bushes with accurate aim. She cried out with physical pain and pain that was also mental, and sprang towards Grace.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

Someone moved off up the mountain, careless of the crackling undergrowth.

Grace had her arms about Rosamund on the instant, and her answering cry was almost as quick.

“What is it? What ails ye?” she besought the trembling one within her sheltering arms.

Rosamund’s breath was coming in little sobbing gasps. “Oh—o—oh! Something—struck me—a stone, I think!”

From the wan spiritless creature that she usually was, Grace flashed into a wild passion of anger. Often before she had reminded Rosamund of a sodden leaf, wind-blown and colorless; now she was a flame, vivid, devouring, like the hot blasts that mow down the mountain forests.

“I’ll KILL anyone that harms ye!” she cried; and raising her voice to a shriek called to the woods that hid the thrower of the stone:

“Come out! Come out in the open! Coward! Ye coward! Come out here and let yerself be seen!”

A jeering laugh answered, and Grace would have sprung in pursuit; but Rosamund grasped her.

“No, no!” she cried. “Don’t, Grace! Don’t! Let him go!”

The mountain woman, panting, fiery, would have broken away from the restraining hands; but Rosamund, inspired, cried:

The LAND of CONTENT

"You wouldn't leave me here alone?"

And as a forest creature, quick to defend her young, is quick to caress, Grace forebore vengeance to hold her friend in a closer embrace.

"He struck ye! You come up here to live with us, and make friends with us, like Doctor Ogilvie, and they go and say you spy out on them! Oh—" her voice echoed from the mountains—"I'll KILL anyone that harms ye!"

"Don't say that! Perhaps he did not mean to——"

"He meant it, whoever it was! Stones don't fly up from the ground, do they? I know—I know what they say, the lazy cowards—I know, I've heerd 'em——"

She paused; a new terror came into her eyes. "Miss Rose! Miss Rose! Don't ye go thinkin' 'twas Joe throwed——"

Suddenly her head dropped upon Rosamund's shoulder, and the straining arms held her more closely.

"Miss Rose, even if 'twas Joe——"

"Grace! Oh, hush! You don't know what you are saying! You must not think that—it couldn't be true!"

"Couldn't it? You never saw my baby. *He* came home drunk, 'struck by lightnin''—that's what they call it, so's not to lay blame on themselves. He

The LAND of CONTENT

fell on her. That's how 'twas. She was a-crawlin' over the sill to meet him—her daddy. An' he fell on her——”

“Put away those thoughts, Grace! Put away that memory! Grace—look at me! You must—not——”

“I'm lookin' at ye. That's what makes me remember. It ain't much to you, maybe, to be friends with me. But it's a heap to me, to be friends with you. Oh——” she threw her arms above her head, and her bitter cry rang out. “Oh, curse the stills! Curse 'em, curse 'em! First 'twas my baby, an' now—if anyone harms *you*, even so be 'twas Joe, I'll kill him!”

It was a devotion undreamed of. Their friendship had progressed insensibly. There had been long talks, when Grace's apparent simplicity had made it easy for Rosamund to open her heart, as far as in her lay; and she had been glad enough to feed the other's hunger for knowledge with tales of the things she had seen in the world, as Grace called all that lay beyond the barrier of the mountains. Yet it had been, as Grace herself had rightly said, not a very large part of life to Rosamund; all the stranger was the revelation of what their friendship meant to Grace.

It was long before she could bind Grace to secrecy; for Grace believed that safety lay in making

The LAND *of* CONTENT

known the dastardly attack of the afternoon. Rosamund denied that actual danger could exist, that the attacks—if such there might be—could possibly go farther; and she very well knew that if to-day's were made known it would put an end to all her plans for the winter, now progressed so far.

Yet all that night she lay awake. It was a dreadful thing to know herself suspected, distrusted, perhaps hated; why, she asked herself, could the mountaineers not read her innocence in the very fact of her remaining openly among them? They did not suspect Ogilvie; why, then, should they look upon her innocent self as a spy?

But morning found her with all terrors gone. Pride of race and knowledge of good intentions had come to sustain her.

In gold, in gems, it is friction which produces brilliancy; in the finer grades of humanity it is opposition, anxiety, suffering, even misfortune, which bring out inherent noble qualities that might else remain undiscovered. The fine courage of high race Rosamund had always possessed, but it lay hidden within her until the sting of an unseen enemy brought it to light. Fatigue and doubts and half-developed fears fell from her in the night; with the coming of the day she found herself strong in courage, in resourcefulness.

The LAND of CONTENT

Ogilvie met her, later in the morning, coming from the post office at the Summit, and White Rosy stopped of her own accord until Rosamund had seated herself in the buggy.

“ You look less tired,” he said.

She laughed. “ I’m not tired at all! I feel as if I could move mountains, even these mountains; I believe I could even move the people on them! ”

He looked at her more keenly, and wondered what had caused her elation. His anxiety for her—and something else—was too great to permit of a smile in answer to hers.

“ It is never too late to mend your ways! ” he suggested. “ I hope it’s a change of mind that’s making you so pleased with yourself! ”

She laughed again, merrily. “ It may be a change of mind,” she said, “ but it isn’t a change of intention.”

She waited for his question, but he only looked grimly at White Rosy’s joggling ears.

“ Don’t you want to know what I mean? ” she asked.

“ Yes,” he said shortly.

Rosamund glanced at him. “ Dear me! ” she remarked, and was provokingly silent until, at last, he turned towards her.

“ Please! ” he begged.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

"Let's talk of something else," she said, and turned her face away from him to hide her dimples. "I don't in the least want to bore you with my affairs. You've been so kind!"

At that he shook his head, tumbled the old cap into the back of the buggy, and ran his fingers through his hair. He heaved a deep breath, and said, in the helpless tone of the bewildered male, "Oh, Lord!"

Then she turned towards him and laughed aloud. "I won't tease any more," she cried. "You and Father Cary almost frightened me, for a day or two, with your warnings and forebodings. Last night I was ready to give up the brown house and telegraph Mrs. Reeves not to come. This morning I have telegraphed her to hurry!"

His face became more stern. "I don't like it. I don't approve of it. You may take my word for it, there will be trouble if you go to live in that place, an unprotected household of women."

"Oh, but we shall not be an unprotected household of women! We are going to have good old Uncle Matt, my old nurse's husband! Surely I told you? Although," she thought to herself, "if old Matt saw a man with a gun I believe he'd crawl under the bed!"

The doctor looked a little relieved. "Well, that

The LAND *of* CONTENT

is the best thing you've planned yet," he said. "I had intended coming twice a day and taking care of your furnace myself; but Matt—did you say the man's name was Matt?—will be on the spot."

"Mercy!" she exclaimed. "I never once thought of the furnace!"

"I imagined as much," he said, dryly.

"Oh, well," she retorted, as he stopped before the brown cottage, "you would never have remembered to come! White Rosy would have had just one more thing on her mind!"

XIII

THE result of Rosamund's increased determination was that, by the end of the week, a curiously assorted household was taxing the capacity of the cottage almost to the utmost. Grace Tobet, however, was not there. Rosamund had many long talks with her about other things; the poor soul had been miserably uneasy since the episode of the stone-throwing, and besought Rosamund to release her from her bond of silence. But that their friendship might bring trouble upon herself she denied, and when Rosamund tried to persuade her to take shelter in the brown house she would do no more than shake her head or raise the girl's hand to her own cheek in caress, or look off to the hills with unseeing eyes tear-brimmed, as on the first day she had spoken of her baby; and Rosamund could not urge her farther after that.

"It's often that a way," Mother Cary said, when Rosamund told her about it. "It binds 'em to a place faster than ropes could. You can break through most anything you can see, honey-bud; it's the things you can't see that you can't get away from. And they holds you all the tighter when they're the things

The LAND *of* CONTENT

you useter have and haven't any more—'specially little child'en."

Eleanor, too, had a word to say on Grace's side. "Can't you see, sweet, that if she leaves her Joe, she will be admitting his unworthiness?"

"But since he plainly is unworthy——?"

"What he is has very little to do with it. It is what she must believe him to be, as long as she can."

"How can she believe him to be anything that is good? He killed their baby—and you know very well that she has had to go through the woods all alone at night to warn him when the Government men are out."

Eleanor shook her head. "We don't know that, Rose. And as long as Grace stays with him and says nothing, we can't know it. She is keeping that fact from being knowledge—if it is fact. Don't you see that she just has to hold on to that vague 'if'?"

"But she cannot possibly love the man, Eleanor!"

Eleanor looked at her curiously, and for some hidden reason which she could not define Rosamund's heart, under that long look, began to beat faster.

"Ah, Rosamund, which of us can understand love?" Eleanor asked. After a pause she added, "I have wondered sometimes whether they really and truly love—the people who question 'why'!"

The LAND *of* CONTENT

Rosamund was beginning to be afraid of the turn the conversation was taking. "Oh, Eleanor!" she exclaimed, somewhat impatiently, "your subtleties are beyond me!"

While they talked, Tim had been tramping back and forth on the front veranda of the house, himself the horse of a little iron wagon that was one of his new toys. He was seldom willing that Eleanor should waste time in uninteresting conversation with grown-ups. He had taken her for his own; and Rosamund, Yetta, Mother Cary—everyone who had ministered to him before—were all but forgotten. Eleanor must now do everything for him; nothing less than complete possession could satisfy his hungry little heart. And Eleanor's hunger for Tim went beyond his for her; as she talked, her eyes followed him, her look brooding upon him as if he were new-born and her own.

At Rosamund's last exclamation she laughed, and bending towards Timmy on one of his turnings, gathered him into her arms, in spite of his indignant-ly protesting squirms and thrusts.

"My subtleties, indeed!" she said, while burrowing for kisses under the curls on his neck. "I'm the most elemental creature alive! I'm nothing more than a mother hen!"

"Matt chopped ve chicken's head off wif a ax,"

The LAND of CONTENT

• said Tim, "an' it hopped an' hopped an' hopped. An' Sue took all its fevvers off. But chickens don't catch cold. An' anyway its head was gone."

"Mercy!" said Rosamund. "Matt ought not to have let the child see that! And I do wish he wouldn't be so—so explicit!"

They laughed, but Eleanor could not ignore the opportunity for a lesson in good manners. She had tried in vain to impress it upon Tim before; now she repeated, "You must call her *Aunt* Sue, Timmy! I call her that, and Miss Rose does. You want to be polite, too, don't you?"

But Tim knew what he wanted; he had thought it out for himself. "She ain't," he said, frowning. "An' I don't want her. I got a muvver."

"Oh! The darling!" cried Eleanor, and let him swagger back to his march with the wagon.

So the boy was provided for, and Eleanor daily gained in health. Ogilvie was delighted.

"Just let it go on for a few months," said he, "and she'll forget she has any eyes. Pity she'll have to go back to work, though," he added.

He had been away for a few days, on some consultation, and so could notice the change in her all the more for his absence. They were driving through the golden woods; the first heavy frost had fallen the night before.

The LAND of CONTENT

Her breath fluttered a little as she answered. "She will not have to work any more—not as she used to—if she decides really to adopt Timmy," she said, palpitating in wonder as to how he would take the disclosure of her gift and what it implied.

He turned quickly to look at her, all interest. "So that's what Flood meant!" he said.

She returned his look rather blankly. "Mr. Flood? What on earth do you mean?"

"I stayed with him in New York, you know. He told me the kiddie's future was provided for, but he was too modest to tell me how. That's one of the things I like about him—his modesty. He's a fine fellow, Flood is."

It was something more than disconcerting to have her generosity attributed to someone else; that he should give the credit of it to Flood, of all people, was plainly provoking.

"Did he give you to understand that he had done the providing?" she asked.

"Why, no! I've just told you he was too modest!" Then, perhaps at something in her look of disdain, he understood. "Oh, I see! I'm sure I beg your pardon! It is you who are doing it?"

She did not reply nor look at him, but flushed deeply.

But he did not seem to think it mattered either

The LAND of CONTENT

way. "Well, it'll be the best thing in the world for them both," he said.

So there was to be no word of praise for herself! She forgot to wonder at his unquestioning acceptance of the fact that she should have enough to spare for such a gift; it did not occur to her until afterward that he must have known of her fortune all along.

In her disappointment and dismay she spoke with a little tremor of anger which did not escape him.

"I suppose you think it is no more than I ought to do!" she said.

He ran his fingers through his hair. "Well! Is it?" he questioned.

She did not reply to that, and he asked, "You will not miss what you give, will you?" By his tone he might have been asking, "Well, what of it? What's money good for, anyway?"

At that she turned to him, head lifted, eyes aflame. "I suppose you are one of those people who think that we ought to divide everything equally—number the people and give them equal shares—so many pennies apiece!"

He laughed good-humoredly. "O Lord, no! If the wealth of the nations were equally divided on a Monday, it would be back in the pockets it was taken from by the first Saturday night! The smart ones would get it all back again."

The LAND of CONTENT

“ I am not one of the—‘ smart ’—ones. But I suppose it wouldn’t matter if I went hungry——”

Whatever she had hoped for from that, his reply was certainly unexpected. He looked at her for a moment, then put his head back and roared—laughed until the woods rang, until White Rosy turned her head to look at him, until Rosamund, her anger melting, laughed with him.

“ Oh, I say! ” he cried at last. “ I’m awfully sorry! Miss Randall—you’ll forgive me for being so utterly stupid, won’t you? ”

“ I did want you to praise me, ” she admitted, dimpling.

Instantly he became serious. “ To praise you would be like praising the sunlight, or the blessed rain, or any other of the crowning works of God Almighty, ” he said.

“ We were talking of Timmy, ” she reminded him, not quite truthfully, but grasping at anything that might turn him from that strain, “ and Mr. Flood! ”

The ruse succeeded. “ Flood! Yes. He’s a big man. ”

“ I don’t think I quite realized that you were such friends! ”

“ I like him, ” said Ogilvie. “ I like him mighty well. He’s a chap who’s not afraid to be fine. I tell you, it was a surprise to me to find him that sort—

The LAND *of* CONTENT

Benson Flood. You know, the name seems to suggest bonanzas, show and glitter, crudeness, perhaps a little—well—not what he is, anyway.”

“But, surely, you have only seen him—twice, three times, isn’t it? How can you possibly know all that about him?”

He smiled. “Oh, men don’t always have to *learn* each other, as they would lessons, you know. I know what Flood is as well as if I had known him for years—and I like him as well, too!”

She looked at his enthusiastic face a little wonderingly. “Women are not like that,” she said. “We—I don’t think we—believe in our friends, as men do!”

“Oh, come now! Why don’t you?”

“Because we don’t. And because we don’t deserve it. Why, you talk about Mr. Flood, who is certainly a new friend, to say the least, as if you would make any sacrifice for him! Women wouldn’t do that for each other.”

He could not guess that her touch of bitterness was due to her new humility—the humility she was so rapidly learning through her experiences here in the mountains; certainly he was far from seeing that he had himself done much to teach it to her, even during the past hour, when he had seemed to look upon her wealth as of small significance; now he was put-

The LAND *of* CONTENT

ting far more emphasis upon the fineness of character of Flood, the man she had so lightly esteemed.

"I fancy Mrs. Reeves would have something to say to that," said Ogilvie.

"Oh, Eleanor! Eleanor is my exception, of course! We all have our exceptions. But aside from Eleanor, there is no one else for whom I would make a sacrifice; yet you would do so for Mr. Flood, wouldn't you?"

Now he was rumpling his hair until it stood on end. "Why, yes, I suppose so! Yes, of course," he said, as if he were wondering where the talk was leading. Then he put it aside, and turned towards her.

"How little you know yourself!" he said.

XIV

BEFORE long there were ominous signs in the Tobet cottage. Mother Cary would shake her head whenever Grace's name was mentioned.

"It's bad now, land knows!" she said. "But it'll be worse, come spring. It ain't for me to deny that them the Lord sends He looks out for; but a body can't help wonderin' sometimes, at His choice o' the places He sends 'em to. Yet it's a livin' wonder how things do work out, honey."

The doctor openly berated Joe, and the two would have come to blows but for Grace's pleadings; afterwards he told Rosamund that Mother Cary had roundly scolded him for his interference, which of course ended the little influence he had over the man. Joe, indeed, swore that he would 'hurt' him if he found him again in his house, and it was only at the brown cottage or the Carys' that he could see poor Grace and give her what help he could. Tobet had also, of course, forbidden his wife to hold communication with 'the stranger woman'; but Grace knew his ways and times well enough to go occasionally to both her friends' houses. She herself could not have told from which she derived more comfort.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

For a while Rosamund was unaware of any further evidences of the mountaineers' distrust; then, in the third week, came the most disquieting thing that had yet happened.

Their evenings at the cottage were usually placid enough. Rosamund had engaged the services of the young teacher of the district school to give lessons to Yetta, who, with the mental avidity of her race, was fairly absorbing knowledge, and rapidly acquiring the speech and manner of the world. She worshiped Rosamund, and tried to copy her in everything; she was urged onward, too, by her awakened ambition to sing, it being understood that her general education must be well on the way before the promised singing lessons should begin. The girl would have spent hours at her books, but Ogilvie had forbidden her reading at night; and Rosamund would read aloud to her for an hour or two after the lamps were lighted.

To-night Yetta had begged, as usual, for a later bed hour, and for once had been indulged. The wind had blown from the east all day, bleak and cold. Rosamund had been more and more restless with each passing hour, and now had a longing for company which made her lenient with Yetta. But at last the girl had reluctantly gone upstairs; and after a while Rosamund went up, too, in search of Eleanor.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

She had not been the only one in the house to be made restless by the wind; Tim had been cross all day, and even Eleanor was glad at last to see him safely tucked into bed. But, having done so, she had scarcely taken her place on the opposite side of the table from Rosamund and Yetta, than a little white-clad figure appeared in the doorway.

“O Timmy!” Eleanor had cried, protesting.

“Well, I forgot to God-bless Pa Cary,” said Tim, as if that justified his reappearance.

“Tim! Go right back to bed!” said Eleanor, with a conscientious attempt at sternness. Tim hesitated, wavered on the threshold, and she gained in courage. “Go back at once!” she said.

His under lip began to tremble. “I can’t God-bless wivout somebody to say it to!” he said, and Eleanor got up, took him by the hand, and led him up to bed and his devotions.

Since then she had not come down again, and when Rosamund went in search of her it was to find her on her knees beside Tim’s bed, asleep, her pale gold hair mingling with the yellow of his, her arms across his little body, one of his hands on her cheek.

Rosamund crept downstairs again, the loneliness of a moment ago pressing now upon her heart like a pain. The sitting-room was warm and cosy, with its open fire and the lamp with a yellow shade; but it was

The LAND *of* CONTENT

empty, for all that. She crossed the room to the window that faced the valley and rolled up the shade. Through the wind-swept air Mother Cary's light twinkled brightly on the opposite mountain; that was a home, too. It added to her sense of loneliness. She went back to her place by the table, her thoughts wandering—from the happy two in the room overhead, to her plans for Yetta; from Ogilvie, to Flood; from the present——

But, gradually, insensibly, into her mental atmosphere, there crept a shadowy, indefinable influence, something malevolent and strangely disquieting. She had never known fear; but as she sat there she shuddered, became cold with an unearthly chill, as if some premonition of horror were laying its clammy hand upon her. She said afterward that she felt herself in a cloud of dread and apprehension such as one might feel before the apparition of something ghostly or uncanny. It was intolerable. She must shake off such mental cowering, and forced herself to turn towards the window through which Mother Cary's light could be seen, thinking the friendly beacon would reassure her.

Then, although her heart seemed for an instant to stop beating, she sprang up; but her knees refused their burden, and she sank again into her chair, leaning forward with straining eyes, clutching its arms;

The LAND *of* CONTENT

for the light on the mountain was blotted out by a hideous thing, a white face set in shaggy hair, a sneering face, a face where drink and hate and fear had set their marks. As she sprang up and sank down again the wicked glare of hate turned into a more frightful leer; then the creature raised a horrid fist, shook it towards her—and vanished into the night.

It was Eleanor who came running downstairs at the cry she tried to choke back.

The two kept watch through the night, and morning found Rosamund shaken and feverish, but firmly determined to lay aside her dread, and at all hazards to keep her friends in the city in ignorance of it.

She shuddered at the thought of what the newspapers would make of it, and of Cecilia's raging, and Pendleton's taunting comments. She and Eleanor, in the reassuring daylight, tried to laugh away each other's fears; and both agreed that they would not be frightened away from the brown house; they agreed, too, that Ogilvie must not know.

But to keep the doctor in ignorance of what had happened was not so easy as Rosamund had hoped. He had many opportunities of hearing rumors that did not reach her; if he had not constantly persisted in his warnings it was not because he no longer feared for her, but because it seemed best to watch, rather than to warn. He went to the cottage every day on

The LAND of CONTENT

one pretext or another; if it was not fear alone which took him there, he admitted to himself no other reason.

It was not altogether because he was too busy with his mountaineer patients, as Mother Cary had told Rosamund, that he had remained among them; now and again he had consulted his friends, and his vigorous enjoyment of the days as they passed also told unmistakably of his recovery; but another year of mountain practice would doubly insure his safety in going back to his investigations in the confinement of the laboratory. Meanwhile he had thrown himself into the work here with ardor, as he must always do with work or play; but now just at the time when he was beginning to think of his return to the city there came into his thoughts an influence as disturbing as it was novel.

Early in the summer one of his classmates, the Doctor Blake who was Mother Cary's old friend, had come from the city for a visit of a day or two, and to him Rosamund's name was unmistakably well known. He had seen her, too, in town. There could be no mistake; she was the only daughter of old Randall, the "king" of Georgia pine. It seemed to Blake a wild freak which kept such a girl here in the mountains, away from her kind, a freak to be distrusted. He watched Ogilvie rather keenly when

The LAND *of* CONTENT

they met Rosamund at Mother Cary's that afternoon, but it was evident that Ogilvie was master of whatever emotions he might have towards her. As a matter of fact, her money counted no more in his estimate of her than a scar on her cheek, or a strand of gray hair, or an ignorance of German would have counted. He knew himself for a man, and more; he knew, as they who possess the embryo of greatness never fail to know, that he had that to offer which all her money could not buy; the belief that she, too, knew as much was fast becoming the essence of life for him.

The thought of her filled his days and half his nights. Her swinging step along the frozen roads, the tired child nestling in her arms, the cadence of her voice as she greeted him, the look of shy withdrawal that he sometimes surprised in her eyes—all would set him inwardly trembling, longing, worshiping. Yet love was new to him, and he feared; inexperience had left him with nothing for comparison. He could not know how far to venture. Masculine instinct warned him to display to her the brightest plumage of his mind and heart, and their walks and drives together were full of talk and intimate silences; but of that which was uppermost in his desire he feared to speak.

Yet his fears no less than his love made him keen

The LAND *of* CONTENT

to notice every shade of expression on her face, and on the morning after her fright at the hideous vision at the window he saw at once that something was amiss. He had been over the mountain earlier in the day to set a man's broken arm, and several things had made him more than usually suspicious that the underworld of the woods was stirring uneasily. A storm of some sort was certainly in the air; the people showed themselves distrustful even of him, and the very children shrank into reserve at his approach.

Rosamund had walked across the valley to Mother Cary's, to confide to her the strange disturbing happening of the night; then she had gone home again, hoping for that day to escape Ogilvie's keen eyes. The tale had been most disquieting to the old woman, and when Rosamund had gone, she sent Pap to the main road to hail the doctor as he passed. She had been bound to secrecy, but she could at least, without breach of trust, send him a message.

"You tell Doctor Ogilvie that I say when wolves are out, lambs 're in danger. Jest that; don't say another word. Ef he's all I take him for he'll understand."

Pap repeated the message word for word and the two men looked into each other's eyes for a moment, in a look that told far more than the message; then Ogilvie whipped up White Rosy with unprecedented

The LAND of CONTENT

emphasis, and the old mare gallantly responded, as if she knew that an emergency prompted the unaccustomed touch. Ogilvie was sure that one glance at Rosamund's face would tell him whether she were the lamb Mother Cary had in mind; and the girl's pale cheeks, that flushed so treacherously when he entered the brown cottage, disclosed the secret she would have kept. But Mother Cary must not be betrayed, and he greeted her as if he suspected nothing.

"I saw Aunt Sue at the clothesline," he said, "so I used the doctor's privilege and just walked in! Tell me if I'm in the way."

She turned a large chair towards the blaze in the fireplace and moved her own a little back, as if to credit her bright color to the heat of the flames.

"Doctors are always welcome," she said.

But that did not satisfy him, and with characteristic directness he pursued the question. "Am I not welcome as a friend, too?"

She bent forward to reach the tongs, and lifted a glowing ember. "You're welcome in every rôle! But you are very formal to-day, aren't you, in spite of your just walking in? Why?"

She was always mistress of herself when she could tease. Ogilvie, however, would not respond to her levity.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

“ Because doctors may prescribe, and friends may advise; as it happens, I want to do both! ”

She sat up very straight and looked at him mockingly. “ Dear me! ” she said, in the dry tone which usually provoked all his Scotch combativeness.

But to-day that, also, he ignored.

“ Where are Mrs. Reeves and the children? ” he asked.

“ Eleanor has taken Tim on a hunt for nuts, and Yetta is at her lessons. ”

He frowned. “ Which way have they gone? ”

“ I have not the least idea. ”

“ Have you seen Grace lately? ”

“ I have not, ” she replied. “ Pray don't mind asking about anything you want to know! ”

He would not notice her flippancy even to frown. “ Because, ” he said, “ she is not at her own house, nor the Allens', and she has not been to the Carys' since yesterday morning; if she has not been here either, there is only one thing possible—or at all likely——”

At last Rosamund became serious; if Grace had gone into the woods it could, indeed, mean but one thing. “ Oh, dear! ” she cried. “ Does that mean—do you think?—that Joe is out again? ”

The doctor nodded. “ And has been for several

The LAND *of* CONTENT

days. The trouble is coming to a head somewhere. I wish I knew where. The very air is full of it, and these people are so mysterious that even I cannot get anything definite. Pa Cary says they all believe there are spies about."

At the word, Rosamund's hand went to her throat, and her lips paled. "Oh, then——" she began, and stopped.

Ogilvie leaned forward and laid his hand on the arm of her chair.

"Then?" he repeated, looking closely at her.

His intentness forced the tale from her. He listened without interrupting, and when she had finished, sat for a while in deep meditation.

At last he drew a long breath, rose, took a turn or two about the little room, and came and stood before her, frowning.

"You shall not stay here," he said.

Of all words he could have chosen none more unfortunate. A tone of fear, a phrase of hidden tenderness, even an appeal to her own sense of the futility of braving the hovering danger—almost anything but the words and tone he used would have induced her to submit to his wishes; but this imperative command of words and voice touched off some quick, foolish spark within her.

"Ah, but that is precisely what I am going to

The LAND of CONTENT

do," she calmly declared. "They will find out sooner or later that I am not a spy. I shall remain here until they do."

Unconsciously, as once before, her name escaped him. "Rosamund," he cried, "I cannot stand it! I cannot bear to think of your being in danger!"

If she heard, she gave no sign of it. "I do not believe there is the slightest danger," she said, "but what if there is? I have taken up my life here; there are always difficulties to be overcome whenever one wants really to do anything. Why should I run away from my share of them?"

He had turned toward the fire, his arm resting upon the mantel-shelf, and his forehead upon his clenched hand.

"I wish I could make you understand how it is with me," she went on. "I have chosen, deliberately chosen, to take this way of living. I have come here to stay, for a time anyway. You would tell me, I know, that I could have the same little family somewhere else. I know I could; but I am not staying only on their account, any more than I am for a mere whim of my own. The place is more my home than any I have ever known since I was a little girl. I love it, and I see so many things to be done, things I can do; and I want to do them. I don't always know how, but I am learning. These mountain peo-

The LAND of CONTENT

ple are distrustful of everyone; but all wild creatures can be tamed, if one has patience. When they have learned to trust me I can help them. I am not going to be driven away. Besides, when all else is said, I don't see the need of it!"

"You had warning last night. Whoever that ruffian was, his coming here meant no good to you."

For a while she was silent, and when she spoke he looked at her, and saw that there were tears in her eyes.

"Oh, I cannot argue it out," she cried. "Of course, you can array fact upon fact to prove me wrong and foolish. Oh—Doctor Ogilvie, be fair! Credit me with a purpose! I have never before had a chance to go on in a simple, clearly defined line of action. It would not seem very much to most people, I suppose—merely to stay here, to live in this little cottage with Eleanor and the children. But it's the only *real* life I've ever known, as far as I can remember. I was dropped into this place by accident, and I found something to do. What is more, I found myself among real people. It is not much—but to live my own life—that is what I want!" In her emotion she stood before him, straight and purposeful. "Won't you give me credit for the strength of it, and not believe me merely willful?"

He was deeply moved; she laid her own in the

The LAND of CONTENT

hand he held out to her. "I will credit you with everything that is brave and good," he said, with utmost seriousness. "If you are really determined to remain here, I will not interfere. If this is what you choose, I will try to believe it is the best thing for you—the only thing."

Her earnestness had fanned in his heart an altar-flame of worship and new faith; its glow shone in his eyes, and her face paled under his look. In the tenseness of the moment there could be no speech, but it seemed as if their souls sped toward each other on a bridge of understanding. They were hushed before the vision of great elemental truth; and although later they came to believe that they had been deluded, that vision of truth remained as having passed between them, a revelation and a message.

Afterward, in the hours when doubt and pain and loneliness were her companions, she often wondered what the outcome might have been; but she could only wonder, for at the highest moment of their silent communion there sounded a well-remembered view-halloo, and a quick turn of the head showed the flash of a big red car that was stopping before the house.

With a low cry she drew away the hand that had been held in his, turned from him, and for an instant hid her face in her two palms, needing the moment to

The LAND *of* CONTENT

recall her soul from the heights. When she turned at the sound of steps upon the veranda Ogilvie was gone; she stooped to pick up his worn brown cap, left unheeded upon the hearth, put it quickly into a drawer, and turned the key in the lock.

XV

THE revulsion of feeling was so sharp as to demand all the effort she was capable of making to move at all. Her self-control had never before been so severely tested; the strain was so great that she forgot to smile, until Pendleton, drawing off his gloves and toasting his back at the fire, which he first took pains to rearrange with as serene assurance as if it had been his own house, said:

“Dear me, Rosamund! Why this exuberant gayety of welcome?”

It was easy enough to laugh, and she felt secretly grateful for his nonsense. She had almost forgotten the time when she had found such banter on her own part a veritable shield and buckler.

“I’m stunned with joy, Marshall,” she laughed. Then, turning to Flood, “Have my woods brought you?”

He flushed with joy that she should have remembered their talk on the Pocantico ride. “Your woods and what’s in them,” he told her. “I’ve brought down a couple of young dogs, and we thought we’d try for some shooting before the snow. That’s due any day now, isn’t it?”

The LAND *of* CONTENT

"Yes, the season has been unusually late, they say. But, Mr. Flood, you must not try to do any shooting around here!"

"Why not?" Pendleton put in, raising his eyebrows; he succeeded in trying to look teasing only so far as to appear malicious. "Tame birds, Rose?"

She ignored his impudence. "You'd get me into greater disfavor than ever," she said, speaking to Flood. "You know there are said to be illicit stills in these mountains; there have been some lawless things done within a year or two, and the Government is watching the people here, or so they believe. They are distrustful of everybody—my poor innocent self included."

"I hope there's nothing unpleasant?" Flood asked, looking disturbed.

"No! Oh, dear, no! But there might be, if you went about in the woods with your guns, and were known to be my friends."

"Your fears are quite groundless, my dear," said Pendleton. "We were not going to stop here, anyway, but Flood hesitates to disillusion you. There's no hotel in your neighborhood, you know."

"I'm so glad!" she cried, and then joined the two men in their laugh. "Oh, Marshall, you're always making me absurd! You know perfectly well what I mean! I had horrible visions of your being

The LAND of CONTENT

murdered in the woods; naturally, I'm not glad there's no place for you to stay! I wish I could put you up here, but——”

“Certainly!” said Flood, to her expressive pause. “We understand how impossible it would be. Fact is, we thought we'd run down to Oakleigh for a few days, and we found we wanted to come a bit out of the path and call on you! Hope you don't mind?”

To her surprise she realized that she was really very glad to see them. She had within the hour been declaring that she had put away the old life, yet here were these two dropped from the skies of chance, to remind her of it; and she was undeniably glad to see them!

It ended in their staying to the midday dinner, when Aunt Sue surpassed the standard of her own fried chicken and beaten biscuits, and Matt could be heard turning the ice-cream freezer all during the first part of the meal, and Tim had to be suppressed by Eleanor because he would persist in trying to describe how the chickens they were eating had hopped and hopped and hopped when Matt had chopped their heads off.

It was the first time Flood had met Eleanor, and it was immediately evident that she impressed him very much. His look was upon her more than upon Rosamund; he watched her every move with a light

The LAND *of* CONTENT

of pleasure in his eyes, and his manner toward her was exquisite—holding something of the deference of a young man toward a very charming, very old lady, something of the tenderness of a physician toward a courageous patient, something of a courtier's manner toward a queen, a little of the look of the lover of beauty at something unexpectedly lovely. And since Eleanor was neither old nor ill nor yet a queen, it must have been her loveliness, fragile and gentle and rare, that had attracted him, since attracted he so plainly was.

He would look from Eleanor to Rosamund from time to time as if trying to convey, silently, to the woman whom he held above all others how lovely he found her friend; and Rosamund, understanding and liking him for it, drew Eleanor out of the little tiredness of manner that was apt to fall upon her before strangers, and Flood brought the color to Eleanor's cheeks when he noticed how Timmy had blossomed under her care. Indeed, the little boy, with the quick adaptability of babyhood, might have been petted and adored all his life, so complacently did he accept his new mother's care and ignore the comments of Flood; for the moment he was absorbed in the celery family which he had spread out before him on the tablecloth.

“It's me an' my muvver,” he said to himself, as

The LAND of CONTENT

he arrayed a short stalk and some longer ones before him, " an' it's Miss Rose, an' it's Yetta, an' it's Matt. An' vey *ain't* any Sue! " Tim could not be prevailed upon to accept Aunt Susan, apparently feeling that in order to repudiate the relationship which he thought her title of courtesy implied he must repudiate her entirely.

After dinner Rosamund managed so that a rather reluctant Flood and Eleanor should be led off by Tim to inspect the chickens. Pendleton was by no means disdainful to pay homage to Yetta's black eyes, and for a while Rosamund watched the two with amusement.

It was the first opportunity Rosamund had found for measuring the girl's improvement. It was amusing to see how well Yetta had learned to imitate Eleanor's manners and her own, how seldom she lapsed into the speech of the streets, yet how much of her native quickness and assurance she had retained. She was never at a loss for an answer to Pendleton's banter; and Pendleton, soaring to farther and farther heights of absurdity, was enjoying himself immensely, when Rosamund decided that Yetta had had enough, and sent the girl off to her lessons.

" Now what did you break it up for, Rose? " Pendleton protested, adding, " It's wonderful how jealous all you women are of me! "

The LAND of CONTENT

She laughed. "Marshall! Your absurdity is only exceeded by your modesty!"

"Oh, I know my worth," said he, folding his hands and looking down, with his head on one side. Apparently he never tired of playing the clown.

"Tell me about Cecilia," said Rosamund.

"Ah, dear Cecilia! She's looking very well this autumn, very well indeed. And young! And slim! I admire dear Cecilia's slimness exceedingly. It's a monument to perseverance and self-denial."

Rosamund understood, and smiled with him. "Her letters have sounded very happy, so I've taken it for granted that things have gone well with her," she said.

"Well, you're responsible for that, aren't you? 'Pon my word, if Cecilia had money enough—or I had—to make her contented——" He sighed. "But Cecilia's up to something. She doesn't seem to—er—to care as much for my company as she did. Why, Rose, would you believe it, she even sent down word to me the other day that she had a headache!"

"Perhaps she had," Rosamund suggested.

"Oh, no. No. If she had, she would have let me see her. I'm good for headaches. No, it wasn't that. Besides, it was the very day after Flood told her he was coming here, and asked if she had any messages for you. No. Cecilia's up to something."

The LAND of CONTENT

He wilted sideways in his chair, and tried to look pensive and pathetic. Rosamund watched him, amused as always, and not in the least understanding what he was trying to imply.

Suddenly he leaned toward her. "And you're up to something, too, Rosy!" he said, as if throwing the words at her. "What's your game in staying down here, anyway?"

She flushed angrily. "Marshall! You go too far, you know!"

"Oh, come along, don't get mad!" he said. "What's your little game? Are you staying up here to draw old Flood on, or is it something else? I won't tell!"

She felt herself enveloped in a hot wave of anger and disgust, as if the fetid breath of some foul creature had blown toward her. She sprang from her chair and went swiftly toward the long window, and throwing it open stepped down to the piazza.

Pendleton followed as calmly as if nothing had been said to arouse her; but she was spared an answer, even a look, for Eleanor and Flood were coming back to the house, Flood declaring that it was time for their adieux.

Rosamund was glad; she had been unexpectedly glad to see them, but now her pleasure was gone. She felt sick at heart, and wanted to be alone. Yet her

The LAND of CONTENT

pride sustained her until they were gone; she stood on the veranda to wave farewell to them as if nothing had happened, one arm about Yetta's shoulders, framed against the background of the little brown house that Flood thought so inadequate a shelter for a creature so beloved and so rare.

Flood felt that he had been discretion itself. He had learned his lesson, and was now too anxious for ultimate success to risk alarming her; but every move she made, every look, every tone had been as meat and drink to his longing.

On their way back past the Summit his mind and heart were full of her, from her first silent greeting to the last glimpse of her with her arm across the child's shoulders. How like her unerring taste, he thought, to have chosen as friend so exquisite a creature as that Mrs. Reeves; and how right Mrs. Reeves had been in all her praise of Rosamund! It had seemed to him to-day that her face had been more than ever full of dancing play of color; certainly her cheeks had flamed when she had come out of that long window to meet him.

But Pendleton broke in on his dreams. "Our Rosy was looking exceedingly blooming," said he. "Wonder what's up?"

He managed to throw something of insinuation into his tone.

The LAND of CONTENT

“ Oh, shut up, you ass ! ” said Flood.

Whereupon Mr. Pendleton raised his eyebrows, smiled, and proceeded to whistle the “ Merry Widow Waltz,” which he knew Flood detested, for one immortal hour.

Later in the evening, when Tim and Yetta had been long in bed, Rosamund and Eleanor were in the sitting-room before the fire, the table with its yellow-shaded lamp drawn up between them. Since the night of Rosamund's fright the shades were kept drawn at night; now the room, in its seclusion, was warm and cosy with the sense of home. Eleanor smiled over a garment of Timmy's that she was mending; she stopped, from time to time, to look into the fire, laying the work in her lap as if it were a task over which she loved to linger.

Rosamund sat back in her big chair, her eyes partly closed, deep in thought. The day had been full of crowding emotions. She mentally recalled first one and then another, trying to marshal them into some sequence of cause and event.

On the last moments between herself and John Ogilvie she dwelt least; even in memory they were too palpitating. It is only after surrender, or after loss, that a woman loves to dwell upon such moments; before, they hold too much of fear, not to call forth

The LAND *of* CONTENT

the feminine withdrawal of the unwon. His looks she dared recall; his pale intensity, the flame in his eyes, the fear and anger there as she described the wicked face at the window, his look before he left her, when Pendleton's step was already on the veranda.

That brought her thoughts to Pendleton, to his insinuations and the slight leer in his look. She shuddered all the more because she knew that, a few months before, she would have parried his impertinence with a laugh, instead of with the scorn and anger she had not been able to hide to-day. She was at least that far from the old life, the old state of mind! She knew now how intolerable she would find the people who had seemed only commonplace before! Looking back, secure in her new life in this purer air, she could say to herself how much she hated their suspicions of everyone, their petty gossip, their searching for hidden, unworthy motives in every least action, their expecting the base to emerge from every innocence, their smiling, flattering faces.

She was glad, she told herself, so glad to be away from all that—all the more glad because she could remember the time when it had not especially displeased her. Yet in fairness she reminded herself that Flood was different. He had been very nice, indeed, to-day—and he had liked Eleanor. It spoke well for him that Eleanor, too, liked him! She

The LAND *of* CONTENT

looked across at Eleanor's tenderly brooding face, and smiled; how suitable it would be, she thought, if Flood and Eleanor—that would relieve herself of Flood's intentions. It was the first time she had been willing to admit that she knew what they were—and intentions on Flood's part would be quite delightful if Eleanor were their object——

So her thoughts passed, from one thing to another, until, suddenly, as if a shot had broken her dream, her heart stood still with fear, then seemed to leap into her throat.

She and Eleanor were on their feet in an instant, hands grasping hands, startled eyes searching each other's and then turning toward the door. This time it was no stealthy presence which had crept upon the house to peer in at the window. Even while they held each other, there in their safety before the fire, something stumbled across the piazza, fell against the door, cried out, seemed to fall farther, as if at the limit of strength—and was still.

Even the negroes in the kitchen heard the noise, and came running in with scared faces.

Rosamund moved quickly and quietly to the door, silently slid back the bolt, and flung it open.

There was no lurking enemy to surprise. Instead, a huddled form lay, as if crushed, before the doorsill. Between them they managed to lift it and bear it upstairs. All the way up Eleanor, though

The LAND *of* CONTENT

trembling and very white, carried her full share of the burden, and kept saying over and over to Rosamund:

“It’s all right, sweet! Don’t be frightened! It’s all right, sweet! Don’t be frightened!”

And Rosamund was saying over and over, on sobbing breath, “O Grace! Poor Grace! O Grace!”

They laid her on a bed and undressed her. The poor cut feet were soiled with blood and seemed frozen; the forehead beneath the pale strands of hair—those pathetic strands of the woman in whom pride and vanity are dead—was cut and bruised; on her body they found larger bruises. They bathed her, and wrapped her in clean linen, and made her as comfortable as they could. Aunt Sue and Eleanor exchanged looks, and shook their heads. They sent Matt after the doctor. Then Timmy called out, and Eleanor went to him. Aunt Sue said something about more hot water, and descended to the kitchen.

Rosamund knelt beside the bed, and presently Grace fluttered back to a dim consciousness.

“Miss Rose! Miss Rose!” were her first words, uttered in a tone of fright.

“Yes, dear! I am here,” said Rosamund, laying one of her cool hands on Grace’s forehead.

Grace closed her eyes as if satisfied. “I had to come,” she whispered. “It wasn’t only for me.”

XVI

THE doctor promptly, in his most professional manner, turned Rosamund out of the room as soon as he got there. He preferred the old colored woman even to Eleanor as assistant; and he showed no sign of remembering that night in the Allen house when Rosamund had fought beside him, through the heavy hours, for a woman's life. When he closed the door of Grace's room upon her, she was keenly hurt; she could not know that while he worked over poor Grace he was recalling every moment of that earlier scene, viewing it now through the glamor of his later knowledge of her.

Aunt Sue was installed as supreme power in the sick-room. Grace's life hung by a thread for days, and before the doctor could be sure that all would be well the disquieting news of Joe Tobet's arrest came to disturb them still further.

Snow lay deep over everything before Grace came down among them, a pale wraith of a woman, but with a deepened sweetness of expectation in her face. They feared to tell her of Joe's predicament, but knew afterward that it would have been better to do so; for she was to discover it in one of those unfore-

The LAND of CONTENT

seen, brutal ways that so often accompany the disasters of the poor. One day a shivering small boy brought a note to the back door, and Grace herself happened to be the one to take it in. It would have been less cruel to give her a coal of living fire.

The folded paper was soiled, as if it had been passed from hand to hand. Its pencilled words were:

“ You or she told Youl be got even with Curs
you JOE.”

Grace waited to speak of it until the doctor came. Then her dignity of manner was a revelation to Rosamund, who had yet to discover that elemental passions can sometimes be as silent as the ages that create them.

Grace looked unfalteringly at Ogilvie as she spoke. “ Where have they got Joe? ” she asked.

Rosamund exclaimed, and motioned to him not to reply; but he was wiser than she. His answer, as simple and direct as her question, gave no evidence of surprise. “ In the city. The jail is stronger there.”

“ Will they let him out? ”

“ The evidence may not be enough to hold him. He is awaiting trial.”

“ Will we know if they let him out? ”

“ I think so.”

The LAND of CONTENT

Then she gave him the soiled paper, which he read and passed on to Rosamund. "He wrote that," she said. "Miss Rose hadn't ought to be here when he gets out."

She gave Rosamund a look of agonized tenderness, then left them. Presently they heard her walking in her room upstairs, up and down, up and down. Ogilvie shook his head when Rosamund asked him to go up to her.

"She must work it out alone," he said. "She's strong enough."

But Rosamund, uneasy, went to Mother Cary.

"Yes, she's strong enough," the old woman said, when she had heard all about it. "Land! She's got to be! An' she's jest got to fight it out by herself. Don't you try to cross her, honey, nor say anything to ease her, 'cause that ain't the way to treat hurts like that. Joe's her man, an' she'd lay down her life for him, ef 'twas only her own life; an' I reckon even ef she thought 'twould save his soul she couldn't 'a' found stren'th to tell on him. Yet that's what he thinks she done! Eh, me! The contrary fools men like him can be when they sets out!"

"He's not worth her caring for! He's not worth it!"

"Land, no! I shouldn't think he was! But that ain't got a mite to do with it! Women folks don't

The LAND of CONTENT

care for them they ought to care for, jest because they ought to; nor they don't stop carin' when they ought to stop, neither. An' Joe bein' her man, she can't give a thought to whether he's worth it or not; she's jest got to go on lovin' him."

"But, oh!" the girl cried, "shouldn't you think his distrust would make her loathe him? To know herself a true and faithful wife, and to be distrusted! Oh!"

Mother Cary's eyes were very bright as she looked out of the window across the snowy field to where Pap was cutting down a tree for firewood. She took one of Rosamund's hands in hers before she spoke, and patted it.

"Yes, I reckon distrust must be about one of the hardest things to set down under," she said. "I know somethin' about it, 'cause time was when I distrusted Pap, though 'twas before we was married, o' course. I distrusted Pap's love, like poor Joe distrusts Grace's. I thought he couldn't possibly love me enough to last for ever an' always, me bein' crippled up like I be; an' I thought it wasn't fair to let him try. So I up an' run away. I tried to get to the station an' so back to the city. It was a long ol' walk for me, an' I had to hide all one night in a barn. But betwixt walkin' an' hobblin' an' crawlin' I got to the station at last; an' there was Pap a-waitin' to take me into

The LAND of CONTENT

his arms, which he did then an' there, good an' strong. I ain't never tried to get far from 'em sence!"

Rosamund was afraid to break the thread of the story by a question, and the old woman mused a while before she went on.

"I reckon there's a door o' distrust that most of us have to open and pass through an' shet fast behind us, before we get to the place where's only content, an' love, an' trust. It ain't confined to jest a few; 'pears to me most everybody has to go through it."

Again she paused, while the girl waited.

"When your time comes, honey—an' I hope it will come, 'cause you can't rightly feel the glory tell you know the shadder—when your time comes to feel distrust, or have it felt against you, jest you do as your Ma Cary tells you! You take a firm holt o' your heart and your thoughts, an' don't you let 'em turn all topsy-turvy! You jest take a firm holt on 'em an' wait. WAIT! Don't run away, like I did; 'cause they ain't any more Pap Carys in the world! It ain't everybody you'd find ahead of you at the station, waitin'. You jest remember that it ain't but a door, even though the doorsill does seem dretful wide. It'll shet behind you, when the right time comes, an' you'll find yo'self a-standin' in the land o' content. That's the best dwellin'-place there is, I'm a-tellin' you!"

The LAND of CONTENT

Rosamund had not been alone with John Ogilvie since the afternoon, three weeks earlier, when Flood's automobile interrupted them; but during the interval she was conscious of an uplift of the soul, a new serenity.

One of the great memories of her life was of an hour of her childhood when for the first time a revelation of something beyond her childish world was vouchsafed to her. She had been awakened at night by a touch of light upon her face; the full moon shone through her window, and its rays had called her from sleep. In her little bare feet she slipped from bed and went toward the casement, drawn by the moon-magic to look upon the beauty her early bedtime had left undiscovered. Great dark masses of cloud floated across the face of the golden disc, black on the side that hung over the shadowy fields and woods, but shining with a marvelous radiance where the moonlight touched them from above.

The child had watched them floating, forming, massing, until they had passed away to the horizon, and left the moon, a floating ship of light, far, far up in the sky, dimming the brilliance of the stars. She had crept back to her little bed with a new sense of things hitherto undreamed of in her childish imaginings, yet never again to be entirely lost—a sense of majesty, of order and immutability, of strange

The LAND *of* CONTENT

beauty, and of the Greatness that kept watch while she, a little child, safely slumbered.

The hour left its mark upon her entire life; and now once more such an impression of security, of beauty, and perhaps of destiny had been laid upon her in the moment when she had faced his soul through John Ogilvie's eyes.

There was no need to hasten further revelation. Indeed, she did not wish for it. She was more than content to rest for a while in the calm of unspoken assurance. It was enough, as much as the hours would hold, until they could grow used to it and expand to the greater glory that was to come.

Ogilvie, too, had something of the same sense of uplift. He, too, had had his revelation. But, man-like, he would have grasped at once at something more definite, more dear, if he had not, with a lover's keenness of intuition, seen that Rosamund was satisfied to wait. He had no fear, no misconception; he felt, rather, a reverence which forbade his hastening her toward the avowal which would bring the surrender he so ardently desired. The same force of love which made him long for it, made him also too tender to urge it. His coming to the brown cottage every day was too much a matter of custom to be remarked upon. There were Eleanor and Grace, Yetta and Timmy to talk to, as well as Rosamund; and he fell

The LAND *of* CONTENT

into the way of arriving in time for the mid-day dinner, just as Tim fell into the way of waiting for him with the announcement of what good things Aunt Susan was going to give them to eat. Rosamund teased Ogilvie about it a little, but Eleanor, the ostensible hostess, remembered the ancient person with whom he lived, took pity on him, and kept him as often as she could. Indeed, Eleanor, like Mother Cary, regarded him as an overgrown boy, very much in need of maternal attentions; if she suspected the state of affairs between him and Rosamund, she tactfully gave no sign of it. So Ogilvie came and went as naturally as if he were a member of the household, and his daily sight of Rosamund lent him patience.

But always he was on the watch for signs of the distrust that still muttered against "the stranger woman." Grace's taking refuge in the brown house had affected the mountaineers in two ways. One faction—for so strongly did each side feel that there were, indeed, definite factions—held that Rosamund had only offered her the shelter which any woman would have given to another in such sore need, and declared that all of Grace's friends were bound to Rosamund by the obligation of gratitude. The other faction, and perhaps the larger, held that if Grace had not actually betrayed her husband to

The LAND *of* CONTENT

the authorities, she had run away from him and so failed in her duty of hiding him, and that Rosamund shared her guilt, if, indeed, she was not directly responsible for it. Mother Cary, whom all adored, came in for a share of blame, for being friends with the guilty ones, and even the doctor, though he was known to be faithfully in sympathy with all his mountain patients, and though no one suspected his integrity toward them, found many faces turned away from him which had hitherto shown only confidence and affection.

That Rosamund was aware of the state of things he could only guess; she gallantly denied any uneasiness, although there were many evidences of the bad feeling against her. They were only trivial things, little annoyances, surly answers, eyes that would not see her; yet they told their story with unmistakable plainness.

It was while things were in this unsettled state that she was surprised by a second visit from Flood and Pendleton; not, this time, in the car, for the roads were impassable. They drove up in the only sleigh that was for hire at the Summit.

Pendleton had hardly got out of his great fur coat before he opened fire; he had evidently come primed.

“What’s all this about arrests and moonshiners,

The LAND of CONTENT

Rosamund?" he demanded. "Cecilia's very uneasy. Had a letter from her day before yesterday, saying she'd come herself if she could do any good, and wouldn't I run up and look around a bit. So here we are, both of us, because Flood wouldn't be left behind!"

"That wasn't quite fair of Cecilia," Rosamund said, flushing angrily. Pendleton had promptly got on her nerves with the alacrity that only an old friend is capable of. "I thought I had made it plain that I mean to be let alone."

"Oh, please!" Flood, the peacemaker, besought them; and Rosamund had come to like his helpless "Oh, please!" so well that she smiled at him, though her eyes were still bright with anger.

"I say, Pendleton," he went on, "you're always trying to fight with Miss Randall." Pendleton only grinned at him. "Really, Miss Randall, we haven't come to interfere, not in the very least, I assure you! Mrs. Maxwell did write; but we wanted very much to see you. That is why *I* came, anyway!"

So far he dared venture, and at the very bathos of his distress Rosamund laughed, and peace reigned again. She told them of Tobet's arrest, and that his wife was now a member of her household. She declared that there remained no possible danger, with Joe out of the way.

The LAND of CONTENT

Pendleton appealed to Eleanor; and Flood, too, gave her a questioning look. She could not hide her anxiety; but that she was not afraid to admit it gave Flood a feeling of security that he would have missed if she had shown herself, like Rosamund, inclined to deny the danger. For Flood believed that the newspaper accounts of trouble present and to come must be the smoke of some fire; yet he feared only a possible unpleasantness for Rosamund, rather than any actual danger.

Ogilvie came in while they were still discussing it. To-day there were no traces of tell-tale emotion to be hidden. He had seen the sleigh before the house, guessed who were within, and now showed himself unaffectedly glad to see Flood. Rosamund inwardly trembled lest Ogilvie should express himself on the subject of the mountaineers' suspicions; she could not know that a look, passed between himself and Flood, was enough to set Flood on the alert.

She talked feverishly while they were at dinner, and her heart sank when, afterwards, Pendleton announced that he was hit with an idea. He was standing at the window, taking in the white sweeps and stretches of snow, the black trunks of the leafless trees, the dark pyramids of the spruces, the more distant shadow of pines.

The LAND of CONTENT

“Jove!” he cried. “Just look at those slopes for skiing and tobogganing! It’s better than Davos!”

Then he turned from the window, his hands deep in his pockets, and stood in front of Rosamund, his head on one side, tipping backward and forward from heels to toes.

“I say, Rosy,” he said, “the best way you can convince us, and poor dear Cecilia, that you are safe up here is to let us stay for a while and see for ourselves!”

Rosamund flushed; he was so wilfully provoking. “Marshall! How can you? You know very well I can’t have two men in my house! Why do you want to make me appear so inhospitable?”

Flood, too, looked as if he would like to express himself forcibly. “Oh, I say, Pendleton——” he began.

But Ogilvie, apparently, saw something of good in the suggestion. “That’s a capital idea, Mr. Pendleton,” he said. “Stay up here a while, and see for yourselves. I’ll be very glad to put you up, if Mrs. Reeves will invite us over to dinner once in a while! My landlady isn’t much of a chef!”

Flood had turned to him quickly, with a keen look of questioning. “Could you really, old man?” he asked.

The LAND of CONTENT

“Bully!” Pendleton cried, grinning at Rosamund. “Bet I can beat you in a snow fight, Rose!”

But Rosamund, biting her lip in dismay, would not look at him.

“I can snow-fight!” Tim announced. “I know how to make a snow man, too! My muvver showed me!”

XVII

IT ended in their remaining ten gala days. Flood telegraphed for the implements of winter sports, and got them the next day. They opened them on the brow of the hill, and Pendleton, who took it upon himself to be master of ceremonies, "dared" Rosamund to lead off on the skis.

"What for is vey long sticks?" Tim asked. And when he saw Miss Rose walk off on them he shrieked, and hid his face in Eleanor's skirts.

The entire household had come to look on. Matt and Sue stood at the corner of the cottage, he leaning on a snow-shovel to keep him in countenance, Aunt Sue with one apron over her turbaned head and her hands rolled up in another. Grace, as white as the snow itself, sat bundled up in rugs on a sunny corner of the piazza; Ogilvie had seen to that.

Eleanor and Rosamund were in scarlet caps and long blanket coats. When Pendleton had fastened on her skis, Rosamund threw aside the coat, and stood, a figure of white against the vaster white, save for the red of her cap and the warm brightness of her hair and face.

She had known many Alpine winters, and was as

The LAND of CONTENT

much at home on skis and snowshoes as in a ball-room.

She turned away from the interested little group to look across the unbroken slope gleaming in sunlight that kissed it to a rosy glow in places, in others turned its frozen crystals to a myriad sparkling points of light. In the hollows and under the shadow of drifts and pines the snow looked blue. She knew where the fields lay, now under their blanket, patterned by fences in the summer. The road wound off to the left, then down, down——

It was only a step or two to the crest of the hill; the leap would be glorious! She turned a laughing glance over her shoulder; Eleanor, Ogilvie, Flood, were watching her intently.

“I dare you!” Pendleton cried again; and she was off, off in one splendid rush and leap, a leap that carried her out and down, far down.

Again Timmy shrieked, and Yetta fell on her knees. Eleanor’s face flushed in admiration, and Pendleton called out,

“Good girl! Never knew *you* to take a dare!”

It was a phase of her new to the two men who loved her. Ogilvie had seen her in many situations, Flood in more; each believed that he knew the full excellence of her, yet, oddly enough, neither had thought of her as this wild, boyish, graceful creature

The LAND of CONTENT

of the out-of-doors. The sudden discovery of it came as a shock to both; for both were by nature men of the open, notwithstanding the fact of Flood's accumulated millions and Ogilvie's eminence in the laboratory. Now, in their surprise, they stood above, on the edge of the slope, and watched her, each thrilling, each showing his emotion in his own way.

Flood, in his surprise, had called out, then thrust one clenched fist into the other palm with a resounding smack; but in a moment his face took on its expressionless mask—expressionless save for the gleam from the half-closed eyes.

Ogilvie had made no sound; he stood perfectly still, with out-thrust under lip, the corners of his eyes wrinkling to a smile; his face wore something of the indulgent, restrained look of a mother when she sees an adored child perform some wonder, yet refrains from praise of that which is so intimately her own; his first move was to run his fingers through his hair.

The two stood there as if spellbound until Rosamund reached the valley and waved up to them. Then Flood and Ogilvie turned, and met each other's eyes. There was something of a shock; instantly each looked away again, with an unspoken feeling of apology, as if he had looked upon a disclosure that was not meant for him.

The LAND of CONTENT

Neither analyzed what he had seen; until that moment neither had suspected that the thought of Rosamund might be living in the heart and desire of the other. Instantly each put the suspicion aside, as if it were an unworthy one; yet, through the hours that followed, it persisted in returning again and again. Each man acknowledged that if it were true of himself, it might well be true of his friend; but each tried to assure himself of its impossibility, even while admitting that, if it were true, there could have been nothing of unfairness on the part of the other.

From their first meeting on the mountain-top Flood and Ogilvie had intuitively liked each other. Through a knowledge of varied types of men, they had learned to look beneath the surface; each recognized in the other many qualities to respect. Men are by nature hero-worshippers, from the time that they look with covetous admiration on the policeman's brass buttons and the motorman's thrilling power, through the period when they worship the home league's star pitcher and third-base-man, the captain of their college foot-ball eleven, and on to their political enthusiasms. There is far more of pure hero-worship in the friendships of men than the world gives them credit for. Flood and Ogilvie had met on a mountain-top, and on a height their friendship was to remain. Each saw in the other "a splen-

The LAND of CONTENT

did fellow"; neither would have admitted in his friend the least shadow of baseness. So, after the unforeseen disclosure of that look, each man felt generously on his honor to appear unaware of any possible feeling on the part of his friend toward Rosamund, even going so far, in his heart and hopes, as to deny that such might exist.

But while this ardent liking existed between Flood and Ogilvie, there was something far different between each of them and Pendleton.

Pendleton liked Flood. He liked him for the virile strength of his personality, as well as for his possessions; he knew him only in his hours of leisure, and might not have liked him so well, nor at all, if he had known him only when he was engrossed in business. But toward Ogilvie he could not disguise an antagonism which would have shown itself openly if he had been more courageous, and which, as it was, appeared in countless small spitefulnesses.

To the man who does nothing there are no creatures less interesting than those whose every moment is taken up with affairs. Between the deliberate idler and the man of absorbing occupation there can be nothing in common; indeed, there often arises more or less antipathy. The business man is apt to retain a hearty disrespect for the idler; to him, the man of leisure must always appear an anomaly, an excres-

The LAND of CONTENT

cence, a parasite of civilization. And even when the worker has developed toward the plane of the connoisseur, the collector, the lover of sports and arts, he seldom does more than tolerate the man who has begun where he finds himself only toward the end of an active career.

Yet Flood found Marshall amusing and likable enough. He was perfectly aware of Pendleton's qualities of the sycophant, the flatterer, the gatherer of crumbs from the rich man's table. He thought of them rather pityingly as a natural outgrowth of the life of that class in which Pendleton was so much at his ease, and regarded them leniently because he believed that there was also to be found in that class so much that was desirable, so much that he himself coveted. He was willing to accept its evil with its good, its defects with its excellence; if it had brought forth a Pendleton, it had also borne the perfect flower that was Rosamund.

But to Ogilvie Pendleton was altogether an abomination; he could see no good in him; his very palms itched to smite him!

They were fortunate in their weather. It seemed as if nature, satisfied with her latest marvel, were holding her breath. Every day of their ten was brilliantly clear and cold and windless. Their voices rang far across the white silence of valley and moun-

The LAND of CONTENT

tain in that hushed atmosphere. The frozen snow crunched even under Timmy's little trudging feet; and the mountain people apparently felt that it was useless to lurk among the spruces when every step they took told where they would be hidden. They came from far and wide to stare at the strange antics of the "foreigners," and grinned at Rosamund, more friendly than they had ever been before.

Pap drove Mother Cary across the valley to look on at the sports; Rosamund called her attention to the new friendliness of the other spectators. The old woman smiled rather grimly. "Land! No wonder!" she said. "Nobody could suspicion those young fellers were spies, cuttin' up sech capers as them, sliding down hill head foremost on their stumicks, an' prancin' around on slappers. I never saw such goin's on, myself—and John Ogilvie one of 'em!"

They laughingly compared notes afterward, and decided that Mother Cary had been quite scandalized by their "capers;" Ogilvie admitted that she had been very severe toward him the day after her drive across the valley.

But for themselves they were glorious hours. Rosamund threw aside the burden of care that had enveloped her during the past weeks, and became as merry as a child, more gay and joyous than Ogilvie

The LAND *of* CONTENT

had ever seen her. She skimmed down the slopes on her toboggan with Tim holding on behind her, his curls blowing out in the onrush of their swift descent; and she would carry him back up the hill again, "pick-a-back," to show him how strong a horse she was. She could outdistance them all on skis, but Ogilvie proved himself the best on snowshoes—thanks to his boyhood in northern Vermont, although Flood, who had faced many a blizzard on the plains, was not far behind him.

On the last day of the joyful ten Flood had gone with Rosamund on snowshoes across the valley to carry something to Mrs. Allen. Snow had fallen during the night, and every bough of pine and spruce and fir had its burden of downy white. The two paused, when they had come past Father Cary's wood-lot, to look down upon the valley.

They stood for a moment or so without speech. Flood looked from the snow-covered fields to the face beside him, as if to compare one loveliness with another; then he drew a deep breath.

"Well," he said, as they went on again, "I'm sorry to be leaving all this!"

For a moment she did not reply; she looked up at him once or twice, and he divined that she had something to say which she did not quite dare to put into words. They had become very good friends, thanks

The LAND of CONTENT

to the freedom of the out-of-door life of the past days. He laughed.

“Go on, please! Don't mind saying it! I haven't any feelings!”

“Oh,” she protested, laughing, “I was not dreaming of hurting your feelings! I was only thinking how—how curious it is that you should—should care so much for what you *are* going back to.”

But he did, nevertheless, show himself a little hurt at that. “Why shouldn't I like it?” he asked. “Do I seem such a savage?”

“Oh, precisely not!” Her mood was kind. “You are not a savage. You are very nice—I'm very glad I've found out how nice you are. But that's just what makes me wonder, you see, how you can like it!”

“Like being nice?”

“No—of course not! Like what you're going back to. New York. Cecilia! Oh—all of that—you know what I mean, don't you?”

“Why,” he said, a little puzzled, “I'm afraid I don't see anything wrong with it—with your ‘all of that!’ Do you think I ought to?”

“Oh, it isn't so much what is wrong with it. It's only that it doesn't satisfy—does it? It is chaff—husks—a bubble—it has no substance.”

The LAND of CONTENT

He considered it for a moment. Then he submitted: "Has this?"

"Well, at least this has substance. It isn't empty."

"Isn't it?" he asked. "Do you know, I should just have reversed that opinion. I should have said there was a good deal more in the life you've deserted this winter than in the life you're choosing to live here!"

She laughed. "Perhaps I've reverted! Or perhaps we are in different phases of evolution! You have reached your—we'll call it your New York—and I have passed through it and come on to something better. Or if that sounds impolite we'll say that I have reached it and tumbled down again!"

"Oh, there's no impoliteness in the truth! You are generations, infinite ages, ahead of me!"

She made no answer to his humility, and for a while neither spoke again. Their talk was, of necessity, largely broken by intervals when all their attention was needed for the task in hand. The light snow made the going uncertain; they were taking the shorter way home, along the upper slopes, instead of crossing the valley, and they had, more or less, alternately to feel their way and to rush swiftly on across possible dangers.

The LAND of CONTENT

At the crest of the last slope Rosamund paused, and they turned to look back at the way they had come. Flood watched her with eyes of devotion, as she stood there with her head thrown a little upwards, breathing deeply, her face warm with her delight in the beauty of the scene before her.

"How lovely it is!" she said, in the vibrating tone that always thrilled him.

"Yes, it is lovely," he said, "but only for a time. It is too much like the real thing!"

"Isn't it the real thing?" she asked, surprised.

He laughed, and shook himself a little. "I mean the real thing that I used to know, the drifts on the plains, sleet in the face, the numbness in your feet that tells you they're frozen—that's the real thing! Believe me!"

She looked up at him, interested. "And you have really felt that?"

"Oh, yes," he said. "I've felt it—but it's a long time ago. I'm glad it is, too. A very little of it satisfies. Nowadays my real thing is—well, what you called a while ago, New York, though that's only a manner of speaking, you know."

"Yes, I know. We've talked back in a circle! I am still wondering why you like it as you do!"

They had crossed their last hummock, and had come to the place not far from the brown house where

The LAND of CONTENT

Matt now spread rugs and cushions every morning; but no one was there to greet them. Far down the long slope of white they could see Eleanor and Tim, moving slowly over the crust; Yetta was already at home on snowshoes, and her crimson-clad figure was skimming over the snow-covered fields. Apparently she was playing a game of ball with Pendleton—something they had invented for themselves; Ogilvie, also on snowshoes, was with them.

Rosamund sent a clear Valkyrie call down to them. They all looked up, and waved. Ogilvie moved closer to Pendleton's side, and the game of ball went on.

Rosamund threw herself down on one of the blankets, and Flood took his place beside her. She still wore her snowshoes, and sat with her knees drawn up, her arms clasped about them, boy fashion. She was watching the others at their game down below, but Flood looked no farther than her face.

Suddenly she became intensely aware of the man beside her; she could not tell how the change came, or whether there were a change at all, except in her intense consciousness of him. She did not turn to look at him; she did not so much as tremble from her position; but slowly, as if the blood were retreating to her heart, her face grew white.

Flood saw the change in her face, and knew that

The LAND of CONTENT

he was the cause of it. His heart beat triumphantly faster.

“Why did you say that you wonder at my liking—New York?” he asked.

She tried, vainly, to speak.

“You know what it represents, to me. It’s something better than I ever had before. It’s friends, it’s music, and art, and the whirl on the Avenue. It is ‘up and on’—and—Rosamund, don’t you know what it is above all else? It is you.”

He had meant to say a great deal, when this moment should have arrived; he had often wondered just how it would come, when he should find courage, where they two should be. He had tried to teach himself the words he thought would be most sure to move her, words that would best disclose the fullness of his faith and his desire; yet now that the moment for speaking was upon him he reverted to the man that was his inmost self, forgetting his practiced phrases, not speaking the words he had rehearsed, but telling his longing in short, rushing sentences of pleading, voicing to her silence the cry of the strong soul to its chosen mate, the appeal, even the demand, of the man who had won a high place to the woman who could lead him up to even greater altitudes of the spirit. He pleaded as a man who has much to offer, but who is yet begging for the crowning gift. Un-

The LAND *of* CONTENT

consciously he disclosed his own greatness of soul, while making her understand that he held her supreme, beyond all that was beautiful, above all that was high.

Before he was done speaking, her head had bent itself until her face was on her knees. Never had she felt herself so unworthy; never had her humility been so great. Yet when he paused, she did not answer; even for his last strong appeal she had no word. He had shown her the depths of his heart, and hers was shaken to its own depths. But yield she could not, turn to him she could not. It was as if two great elemental forces met, and clashed, and refused to combine. She could not altogether repudiate his appeal, yet she must be true to the stronger one which held possession of her heart.

As he watched her in a silence that seemed still to vibrate with the strength of his words, she raised her head to look at the figures now coming toward them up the long slope. Suddenly she saw that Ogilvie stopped short, and, apparently at some word from Pendleton, looked up toward herself and Flood. He took a hesitating step or two, came on at a wave from Pendleton; then he turned away, leaving the others to return without him.

Some silent message had come up the mountain to her; Rosamund had found her answer to poor Flood.

The LAND *of* CONTENT

The others were out of sight for the moment behind a low growth of pine; only Ogilvie was visible as he made his way along the other ridge, taking his steps heavily, seeming suddenly to have become weary.

Rosamund watched him for a moment; then she turned her white face, pitiful with the knowledge of the hurt that she must give him, toward Flood. He must have read something there, for, startled, he bent a little closer; then, following her look, he glanced from her to Ogilvie, and back again. Her eyes did not waver from him, and when they had to answer the question in his, the paleness left her face, and a great wave of color flooded it. He held his breath, and his unspoken question must have become imperative; for she nodded, her parted lips refusing to form words. Then, withdrawing her look, she hid her face in her arms.

Neither of them ever realized that she spoke no word at all. Her reply had been too well-defined to need speech. Flood understood.

XVIII

THE morning after the departure of Flood and Pendleton, Eleanor and Rosamund went out to the veranda for their usual after-breakfast "breath of air," and stood arm in arm, looking over the long slopes which had been the theater of their wonderful ten days' sport. Apparently the same thought came to them simultaneously. They looked at each other and smiled.

"Did you ever see any place so empty?" Eleanor asked.

Rosamund shook her head. "I never did," she said. "Isn't it absurd?"

"It's like being in a room when the clock stops!" said Eleanor, and Rosamund laughed.

"Isn't it curious how much of the city feeling those two brought with them? Before they came I felt as if New York were miles—oh, continents—away. This place was home, the center of the universe. Now—well, now this is 'way off in the country'!"

Eleanor laughed understandingly. "I know! And yet not once while they were here did we do anything we should have done in town! No one so much as mentioned bridge!"

The LAND of CONTENT

"It must have been Marshall's presence," said Rosamund. "Certainly Mr. Flood never suggests town to me!" She flushed, remembering what their last talk of New York had led to. He had taken it so well, proved himself so completely the master of his emotions, shown her so gently that he held her blameless and still supreme, that she had never liked him so much as after having shown him how little she liked him!

Eleanor looked at her curiously, for she suspected something of what had passed the day before; but she had cause to look at her wonderingly more and more, in the days that followed, days which, for Rosamund, soon became filled with mixed emotions.

"I want to see my doctor," Tim said at dinner one day.

The three women looked at one another as if it had just occurred to them that Ogilvie had not, indeed, been to the brown cottage that day, nor the day before, nor the one before that. Nearly a week, in fact, had passed since the departure of the two men, and not once in that time had White Rosy stopped before the house.

"Why, he has not been here since Mr. Flood left! He must be ill," said Eleanor, trying to speak as if the idea had just occurred to her.

"No, he ain't," said Yetta, always willing to give

The LAND *of* CONTENT

information. "I saw him driving around by the other road yesterday. He ain't sick."

"Why, it's five days since he was here," Grace said. "He must 'a' forgot you, Timmy!"

Tim's lip began to tremble, and he turned to the ever ready Eleanor to be comforted.

It had been a week of restlessness for Rosamund. The visit of Flood and Pendleton had recalled enough of the old familiar atmosphere of cities to make the solitude of the mountains seem strange. She had been so sure that the new life was the best one! Now she was disgusted with herself to find that something of the old restlessness had returned. She told herself, with increasing determination, as the empty days wore on, that she had become dissatisfied with the pleasant monotony of the new life because a breath of the old one had blown toward her. For her admission to Flood, drawn from her unawares, as it had been, even before Ogilvie himself had demanded it, gave her a self-consciousness which was hard to bear. But apparently her secret was to remain with Flood. Ogilvie did not come to claim it. It had long become his habit to stop at the cottage whenever he passed there. For the first few days of his absence, she was only sorry that he did not find time to come. She could have no doubts of him. For weeks she had been happily sure that he was only waiting for a sign from her

The LAND of CONTENT.

to put into words what his eyes and manner were always saying. To have doubted him would have been to doubt the foundations of the world.

But gradually she became anxious at his prolonged absence. All sorts of womanish fears began to crowd upon her. Although for a long time she had heard no mutterings of trouble from among the mountaineers, yet now she imagined all sorts of horrors, with Ogilvie as their victim. When Mother Cary told her, one day, that the doctor certainly must be sick, her fears went beyond bounds. She knew herself to be his own, she believed him to be hers; courageously she ignored her maidenly hesitations, and went forth to meet him.

All night she had lain awake nerving herself to seek him out; but when morning brought the hour of their meeting she forgot everything save her anxiety for him. She had convinced herself that he was in trouble, and staying away so that no shadow of it should fall on her.

She knew which way White Rosy would bring him. It was snowing, but she put on her warm red coat and cap, and went quietly out of the house, walking down the road toward the Summit, to meet his sleigh on its way to the valley. She waved to him when he came in sight, but apparently he did not see her; as he drew nearer she waved again, and called.

The LAND of CONTENT

He answered, for such a greeting had passed between them many times before, and was not to be ignored. But when the sleigh stopped beside her she cried out at the drawn whiteness of his face.

“ Oh! ” she cried, her hand over her heart, “ you are ill! ”

But he managed to smile, and threw aside his worn old fur rug with an inviting gesture. “ Ill? Not a bit of it! Let me give you a lift to the cottage! ”

Mechanically she took her place beside him, and he urged White Rosy on. She looked at him with anxious eyes and parted lips, feeling all the while as if she were in some bewildered dream, where the real was unreal, where everything was distorted—like itself, yet strangely unlike.

Always before they had talked as fancy led them, or were comfortably silent; now he was so unlike himself as to manufacture small-talk, commonplaces, nothings. There was no reference to his not having been to the cottage, no hint of having missed her, no least word, in fact, of anything personal between them. He talked on, almost feverishly, without looking at her, while she sat there numbly, dazed at the change in him, but wounded far beyond other thought or speculation.

He stopped the sleigh in front of the brown house,

The LAND of CONTENT

and she got down without looking at him; and still without speaking she went inside. He had not so much as suggested her driving on with him, as she had done half a hundred times before!

Grace, in a deep basket chair, was smilingly watching the pretty group before the fire—Eleanor, teaching the two children how to pop corn, with Tim on her knee vigorously shaking the wire basket. They looked up as Rosamund entered, and at sight of the girl's face Eleanor put Timmy quickly down from her lap and jumped up, with a little anxious cry.

But Rosamund blindly, unheeding, went past them and up to her own room. She closed the door and locked it, and made some incoherent answer to Eleanor's entreaties. She never knew how long she sat there, silent, motionless, without removing her hat or coat, dumbly trying to control the mingled shame and longing that surged through her. Vainly she searched through her memory for an explanation; she had done nothing to offend him, no least thing that should estrange him. Even now she could not believe that he would wantonly hurt her; her faith in their love had rooted itself too deep in her heart to be easily disturbed.

At last she called upon her pride for help, only to find that pride itself lay sorely wounded. But it was that which enabled her at last to lay aside hat and

The LAND *of* CONTENT

coat, to bathe her face and rearrange her hair, even to dress herself in her most becoming gown—that sure refuge of a suffering woman!—and go downstairs to meet Eleanor's questioning, anxious eyes. It was not until Ogilvie came back later in the day, for a hasty call at an hour when he knew the entire household would be assembled, that anger came, mercifully, to her relief. She saw that he wished to make it seem as if he had always come at that hour, as if his visits were habitually that far apart; she understood that he was determined to make it impossible for her to ask wherein he suspected her of offense. He meant to give her no opportunity to explain or demand explanation; instead, he was taking this way of turning back the hands of the clock. He was deliberately withdrawing from their intimacy, putting their friendship back upon a plane of formality. It would seem as if he were trying to show her that his feelings had changed. Yet she had faced her own love too frankly, in her heart's secret communings, to be able to deny it now. She could only, in an agony of shame, tell herself at last that she had been deceived in his.

The days that followed were full of misery for her. All her life she had been the center of a little world of love and admiration. For the first time some one had turned from her; the pain of it was not lessened because the one who spurned her had come to

The LAND of CONTENT

hold first place in her heart. Yet such was her attitude that not even Eleanor dared say a word which might touch upon the subject ever so remotely. Eleanor did, indeed, watch her with yearning eyes, and Rosamund, sensitive in her suffering, believed that she talked of her with Grace and Mother Cary; but it was only by their avoidance of Ogilvie's name that they showed any suspicion of what was in her heart. Had Eleanor dared to speak, Rosamund would not have been able to silence her; for she needed every atom of her strength to appear unconscious and natural whenever Ogilvie came. She would not avoid him. She could only be feverishly gay before him; and Eleanor noticed how much more grimly his face set itself after each visit.

The weeks passed, quickly for the rest of the household, slowly enough for Rosamund. She took long walks with Yetta; as Grace grew in strength she went with them, taking them to call on her mountain friends, who had shown themselves more friendly toward Rosamund since they had watched her at play—and since the arrest of Joe Tobet, always a disturbing personality. They came to see Grace at the brown house, where Rosamund made them feel at home, and gave them coffee and cake and talked to them about their children, and loaned them patterns, which she bought for the purpose, and which Eleanor

The LAND of CONTENT

showed them how to use. Rosamund's greatest comfort lay in the fact that she was coming to be of use to them, thus fulfilling the desire which had been her excuse for remaining among them.

For other exercise she had no desire; she could not put on snowshoes or skis without recalling a time which she was trying to forget; besides, she had no heart for play. And soon even the walks became not unalloyed pleasure. Although no further warnings had come, either to herself or Grace, and although the mountain people continued to show themselves more and more friendly, Rosamund was conscious of a feeling of uneasiness, a dread of ominous, unseen horrors hovering near, of stealthy presences following her, of eyes peering at her from the leafless undergrowth or through the branches of the scrub pine. She tried to persuade herself that it was all a part of the foolish imaginings of a timid woman, yet had to admit that she had never been timid before; gradually the feeling of uneasiness became almost unbearable, in her increasing nervousness.

She welcomed the relief of Christmas, although it was Eleanor who went to New York for their Christmas shopping. Rosamund resolved with herself that she would not leave the Summit until she had overcome the vague fear that was now present with her whenever she left the house. She would conquer that,

The LAND of CONTENT

or find out the reason for it, even though the relations between herself and Ogilvie were at an end forever. So she sent Eleanor in her place, reigning alone for two weeks in the house which had come to seem more Eleanor's than her own.

Eleanor returned on Christmas eve, all prepared to be a most munificent Santa Claus. It was only after the tree was trimmed, and they had filled bulging stockings for everybody—including the Carys and John Ogilvie—that she had a moment alone with Rosamund.

At last, however, Grace went upstairs, and Sue and Matt beamingly bade them good night; Tim had not yet awakened with the first of his repeated demands to go downstairs and see whether "Santy" had come. Eleanor threw herself wearily into a big chair, and Rosamund perched on its arm.

"Well, who did you see, and where did you go, and what did you do?" she demanded.

Eleanor laughed. "I saw Mrs. Maxwell, for one, and she was looking exceedingly pretty and youthful."

"Was she in a good humor?"

"Well, she invited me to luncheon!"

"Oh, then she was! I suppose she had gotten my Christmas check. I've sent to Tiffany's for some

The LAND of CONTENT

emeralds for her, besides. She'll get them as a surprise, to-morrow morning."

"Emeralds! How munificent you are!"

Rosamund laughed. "I'm afraid I'm only following the line of least resistance, Eleanor! Cissy's an angel when she's pleased. But didn't you see her more than once?"

Eleanor's pause was scarcely perceptible. "Mr. Flood asked us all to dinner at the Ritz," she said.

"How nice of him! You and Cissy—and Marshall, I suppose?"

"Of course!"

"Then you saw them together. Tell me, Eleanor, do Cissy and Marshall really care for each other, do you think?"

"Oh, my dear! Don't ask me such a question as that!"

"Why not? I've wondered sometimes whether they would marry, if there were more money between them. I'd like Cissy to be happy; but, of course, she'd have to be happy in her way!" She thought for a while, then added, "Marshall intimated that 'dear Cecilia' was setting her cap for Mr. Flood! What do you think about that?"

"I don't think anything at all, and it's bed-time," Eleanor answered, trying to rise.

The LAND of CONTENT

But Rosamund's arm across her shoulder restrained her. "Not yet! I want a long talk. I have missed you so dreadfully, old precious!"

Eleanor reached up for the hand on her shoulder, and looked up into the girl's face. "I didn't miss you, sweet! I took you with me!"

Rosamund laughed, more joyously than in weeks. "Oh, what a lover-like speech from Eleanor!" she cried. "Who has been coaching you?"

It was the most innocent of questions; but instantly Eleanor's usual whiteness vanished. A wave of pink crept up from her throat to her cheeks, to her temples, to the line of her gold hair. Rosamund watched, amazed beyond expression. Then Eleanor sprang up.

"We really must go to bed!" she cried.

But Rosamund had her by the shoulders. "Eleanor!" she gasped. "Why — Eleanor — *who?*"

But Eleanor had broken away, and was running up the stairs, leaving Rosamund to a bewilderment which ended in a little gasp of understanding and delight.

XIX

THE first weeks of the new year passed rather drearily. Christmas had been a day of disappointment for her, although she threw herself into the carefully planned festivities with a feverish gayety. The Carys had come across the valley to see the tree, and before dinner-time every gift had found its way to the one it was intended for, except the big net stocking which the children had filled for the doctor. He had promised Tim to come that morning; yet the day passed without him. He sent word that he was called over the mountain; yet, legitimate though the excuse was, Rosamund became gayer than before—for anger always acted as a goad to her self-control.

After Christmas his calls grew farther and farther apart; sometimes a week passed without his coming at all. When they met upon the road their greeting was cheerful enough—too cheerful! Eleanor watched her, wondered, and said nothing. Rosamund was aware that something new had come into her friend's life, and rejoiced, for Eleanor fell into the way of wanting to go for the mail; or if any one else brought it, she would take the letter that was ad-

The LAND of CONTENT

dressed to herself in a characteristic handwriting that Rosamund knew, and ran off with it to read it alone. Had it not been for Grace's growing need of her, and for the new friendliness of the mountain people, Rosamund would have deserted the brown house, for a time at least. But the increasing confidence of her neighbors was unmistakable; and she told herself that she would remain throughout the winter, if only to prove John Ogilvie's forebodings wrong.

But all the while, as time passed, more and more, on her walks and in her own house at night, she was becoming haunted with that feeling of being watched and followed. She spoke of it to no one. Grace alone, her most constant companion, might have offered some explanation; but Joe Tobet's trial was approaching, and Grace was in no condition to be needlessly alarmed. Mother Cary was showing herself increasingly anxious about Ogilvie; and the teething grandchild kept her away from home much of the time. So Rosamund confided in no one; but especially whenever she was out alone, or towards twilight, she was possessed by the sense of a shadowy something watching, following, haunting her. It amounted to an obsession, a fear that was all the more terrifying because it could not be faced. She tried to persuade herself that it was a trick of overwrought nerves, a wild phantasy of the imagination; and the

The LAND of CONTENT

better to convince herself of that she laid little traps—sprinkling fresh snow over the path to the house, for one thing, only to find a man's footprints on it in the morning.

When the time came that she would wake in the night in horror, from a dream of something unseen creeping upon her out of the dark, she knew that she must somehow find and face the elusive presence, whatever it might be, or become utterly unnerved. Moved by the impulse of a frightened creature at bay, she had tried to do so before, but in vain; now, however, in her determination she laid a plan which was more likely to succeed.

There were two ways from the brown house to the post-office; by the road it was a countryman's long mile, and until the leaves fell she had not discovered that there was a shorter way by one of the hidden paths worn by the mountaineers. This little path ran along beside the highway at times, though higher up on the mountain-side, so that anyone walking upon it could look down, unseen, on the road; now and again it cut across turns, through woods, often with sharp turnings to avoid some boulder or fallen tree.

Although at the thought of it her heart beat with something more closely related to fear than she cared to admit, Rosamund determined to take the little frozen path, and when she felt the presence lurking

The LAND of CONTENT

back of her to turn, at one of the points where the path bent aside, and, her movements hidden by the nature of the path, to retrace her steps and face whatever was following her.

At first she thought the Thing must in some ghostly way have divined her purpose; all the way to the Summit she knew that she was unfollowed. But on the way back, scarcely had she turned into the path when her heart gave a leap. There was the sound, so detestably familiar of late, of a stealthy footstep, which stopped when hers did, and which came on, quietly, relentlessly, when she started forward again. Nerving herself to courage, she walked quickly on until she came to a place where the path turned sharply; there for a moment or two she paused, to let the pursuer gain upon her, then quietly and quickly retraced her steps.

The ruse was successful. She could hear the footsteps come on, the man plainly unaware of her returning. Suddenly she stepped a little out of the path and waited. The man came nearer, was opposite her—and with a cry, her hand on her heart, she faced—John Ogilvie.

For a long minute they stared at each other. She could scarcely believe the evidence of her eyes, yet it was surely Ogilvie. “Is it you who have been following me?” she gasped.

The LAND of CONTENT

His shoulders drooped as guiltily as a schoolboy's caught in mischief; he looked at her dumbly, wistfully.

"I—it—Yes!" he stammered.

For a moment she could not speak, so amazed was she. When she did, he flushed deeply at the scorn in her voice, but at once grew pale again.

"Has it amused you to frighten me?" she demanded.

He took off his cap, and ran his fingers through his hair in the old perturbed gesture. There was a pale intensity of yearning on his face, a dark gleam of hungering pain, something of the bewildered misery of the lost child, an agony of renunciation with none of that exaltation which makes renunciation beautiful. Despite the sharp cold of the closing day he looked hot, disheveled, as one hard pressed. His breath came quickly and painfully, as if he had been running a race. Every vestige of color left his face as he stood there, his look not faltering from hers.

"Oh, how could you do it?" she cried, tears starting to her eyes.

"I didn't think you knew," he said, hoarsely.

"Not know? Not know!" she gave a little laugh that was half a sob. "I have gone in terror—for weeks!"

"I am sorry," was all he found strength to say;

The LAND of CONTENT

and it seemed as if the words could scarcely pass his lips.

In the sudden revulsion of feeling she was becoming shaken with anger. He saw that she misjudged him; but she had never seemed to him so beautiful as in her scorn and anger and resentment. The appeal of her beauty only added to his distress. The moment was as tense as that earlier one when their hearts had been disclosed; but now no one came to break the spell. Instead, Rosamund turned, and walked away from him.

He had believed, during these weeks, that he had schooled himself to silence and restraint; but she heard him call, hoarsely, chokingly,

“Rosamund! I had to—know you were safe! I had to—see you!”

Then, for her, the world threw off the horror that had befogged it for weeks, and once more opened to light and life. Anger, resentment, doubt, all—all were swept away at his cry, were as if they had never existed. She heard the love in his voice, and with a little answering cry of her own she turned and ran toward him. Shyness and restraint had no place in this new happiness.

In a moment she would have been in his arms, for they were opened toward her. But before she had quite reached him he threw them upward, across his

The LAND *of* CONTENT

face, as if to shut off the sight of her, and with a cry she could never forget turned and ran, stumbling down from the little path to the highway, crashing through the bushes, running, running, in the desperate haste of a man fleeing from temptation, over the frozen ruts, sometimes stumbling, almost falling, recovering, running still—running away from her.

She could never tell how she got back to the cottage, how she found her way to her own room through the blind agony of the hour. What stood between them she could not surmise; yet now she knew, beyond all doubt, that he loved her. His cry still rang in her ears. There might remain wonder, distress, sorrow, even separation; but doubt had been forever swept away.

Somehow she got through the evening, and, later, slept. She awoke before dawn as if someone were calling; and, as in answer, she slipped from the bed and went to her window. She thrust her feet into her fur-lined bedroom slippers; the heavy coat she used for driving lay across a chair; she fastened it around her, and turned the full collar up about her bare white throat. The air was very cold, but so still that it held no sting. Over the sleeping whiteness of the valley, the snowy steeps of the lower hillsides, the dark crests of the mountains, myriads of stars shone with a pale radiance more lovely far than moonlight. Mother

The LAND *of* CONTENT

Cary's lamp burned, small and clear, on the side of the opposite mountain, which at night seemed so like a huge crouching beast; little farmsteads in the valley and the nearer cottages were alike dark and slumbering patches of shadow. She watched the steady brilliance of a planet pass towards the horizon and sink over the mountain. A star fell. After a while, from somewhere far away, a cock crowed. The earth was waiting for the day.

Then a subtle change began. The stars grew dim; the sky deepened its blue, and again slowly paled. The western mountains were faintly crowned with light, and under the base of those to the eastward shadows gathered more closely. Again a cock called, and was answered from near at hand. Over the eastern mountain tops an iridescent wave of color spread upward. So still was the air, so silent lay the earth, that it might have been the expectant hush of creation, the quiet of some new thing forming in the Thought which gives love birth. Dawn was there; and through the stillness something stirred, or dimly echoed; almost a pulse it seemed, or the first faint throbs of life. Then gaining strength, or coming nearer, the sound came up to her more clearly. She knew where the road lay, white on white; along its winding lift something was moving. Surely the sound came from there! Nearer, more clearly, beat

The LAND *of* CONTENT

upon beat, she heard it. At last she made out the form, and watched it with straining eyes and heart that yearned toward it.

From some night errand of ministration his old white mare was wearily bringing him homeward.

XX

YETTA, a pretty girlish figure in soft gray, was leaning on the rail of the box, lost in the absorption of her first opera. For three or four exciting days they had been in the city, and Yetta felt as if she had been swept into fairyland. Everything was wonderful. Miss Randall had blossomed into a princess in marvelous raiment. The most beautiful lady in the world, Miss Randall's sister, had taken her to shops and bought her various garments as fine as Miss Randall's own. She had been whirled about in warm, closed automobiles. Footmen at whom, less than a year ago, she would have been pleased to smile, had opened doors for her while she haughtily passed through, outwardly oblivious of their magnificence. Miss Randall's friends, while they asked various questions about her as if she had possessed neither eyes nor ears, were mostly very kind and gentle to her. It was wonderful, and Yetta felt that the greatest day of her life had been the one when Miss Randall, coming down to breakfast, had surprised them all by declaring that she was going to New York that afternoon for a week or two, that Yetta was to accompany her, and that neither Mrs. Reeves, nor Grace, nor

The LAND of CONTENT

Timmy, nor Aunt Sue, nor Matt must divulge to a soul among their neighbors that she had gone, because she would be back before they had had time to think twice about it. And the crowning glory of it all was this, that to-night she was in the great Opera House in a box, leaning out toward the stage, and listening, listening, listening! She was certainly herself, Yetta; but it seemed as if she must also be someone else—someone in a lovely soft gray gown to whom Miss Randall's friends, coming into the box from time to time, bowed formally, as if she were a lady, and asked how she was enjoying herself; and quite secretly, though with all the intensity of her soul and her imagination she knew it, she was still another person who should, some day, be there on the stage, charming these hundreds of people as she herself was now bewitched, by the joy and beauty of a voice—her voice, Yetta's! But to-night it was enough to be a fairy princess!

Rosamund had not stopped to speculate upon Yetta's readiness for the great experience until they were on the north-bound train, on the day after her last encounter with Ogilvie. Her own need had been too pressing to admit of any other speculation or demand. She knew, when she turned back from the window after her vigil of the dawn, that she must get away for a time, away from the very thought of him,

The LAND of CONTENT

if she was to be able to continue to think at all. So she had bound the remaining members of the household to secrecy, and, with Yetta, started for New York.

The girl was really presentable, she thought. A child of no other race could have adjusted herself so quickly to the new demands; she believed that Yetta was now ready for a wider horizon, for she spoke and moved so well that Rosamund was sure even Cecilia's fastidiousness could find little fault in her. She meant to give her a glimpse of the larger world, to have her voice "tried" by a competent critic, and then to return to the little brown house, perhaps with a governess for the girl, someone who could do more for her education than the little school-teacher. At any rate, the trip would give her time to recover herself, to think, perhaps to decipher something of the puzzle of John Ogilvie's conduct.

So, to-night, Yetta was listening to her first opera, and Cecilia was chattering away at her side, their friends coming in from time to time to greet the returned one. It all seemed as unreal to Rosamund as to Yetta, so sudden had been the transposition.

Pendleton came late into a box across the semi-circle; Cecilia shrugged and pretended to be unaware of him. It was the first time Rosamund had seen him since her return, and she was beginning to wonder

The LAND of CONTENT

with some amusement whether he had transferred his attentions from Cecilia of his own accord or at the lady's suggestion, when she saw him hastily borrow his hostess's glass, take one look through it, and dart from the box. She knew what was coming.

"Rosy!" he cried, with his familiar impertinence, only grinning at Cecilia, who in turn just raised her eyebrows and became absorbed in the aria. But he, unabashed, bent over Rosamund. "Rosy! It can't be you! And—by all the saints, is that, is that the creature who yelped at Benny a few short months ago?"

"Be quiet," Rosamund whispered, laughing, in spite of herself, at his nonsense. "Don't be so absurd, Marshall!"

"Absurd!" he cried, in mock indignation. "Is it absurd to greet the dawn? Here we've all been living in the darkness of your absence, and now you're back at last, and you tell me not to be absurd! I like that!"

At his voice Yetta had turned for an instant to smile a recognition.

"Good Heavens!" he whispered, "what have you done to her?"

"It's nothing to what I am going to do," Rosamund told him. "But you are not to make love to Yetta, my dear Marshall; I'm not going to have the

The LAND of CONTENT

child told she's beautiful. Who knows but she might take you in earnest?"

Pendleton grinned cheerfully, and drew a little chair to her side. "All right, my dear," he said, "I won't say 'boo' to her!"

There were other visitors off and on, but for two acts he flagrantly deserted the woman he had come with, and sat back of Rosamund's chair, talking over her shoulder.

"How's Eleanor?" he asked.

Rosamund thought of Eleanor in the quiet room in the brown house, while she was here, with the song of the goose-girl in her ears—and her heart warmed as our hearts are apt to warm toward those we have left behind.

"Eleanor is well, and lovelier than ever," she told him.

Pendleton screwed up his face. "You aren't the only one who thinks she is lovely, old lady! If you don't watch out she'll spike your guns with Benny! He followed her around like Mary's lamb when she was up before Christmas; and I've known too many men and women in my time, Rosy dear, to believe they found nothing better to do than to sing your praises!"

Rosamund looked at him, and smiled tantalizing-

The LAND of CONTENT

ly. "Oh, we all know how experienced you are, Marshall," she teased him.

"Why don't you ask after Flood?" he pursued, ignoring her taunt; she smiled, and meekly said, "Well, how is he?"

"Bloody-thirsty!" he said, in a sepulchral tone.

"What?" she laughed. "What on earth do you mean?"

"Fact. He's had a lust for killing, a sort of Berserker rage against everything and everyone, ever since we got back from your place, except while your Eleanor was here. Finally he got into a regular fury with me, said he'd do various things to me—sort of speech you'd expect from a navvy, you know. Queer how those fellows revert. I told him to go west and shoot wild beasts, and, d'you know, he took me at my word! Now what do you think of that?"

Rosamund was greatly amused. "I think everyone ought to take your word with a grain of salt," she said.

He shook his head at her with mock reproach. "What makes you so incredulous, Rose?" he asked, sadly. "It's a lamentable trait in a woman!"

"I, at least, don't fly into rages with you," she retorted.

At that, he put on an air of intense depression.

The LAND of CONTENT

"It's well you don't," he said. "Two rages on your account are enough."

"On my account? Two?"

"Oh, yes, yes, wholly on your account. You little know, Rosamund, what I've tried to do for you!"

"Marshall, you are too absurd!"

"Now there's that lamentable trait of yours again, Rose! Really, it's time you came down from your mountains, if that's what they do to you!"

"Oh, well, Marshall, I'll believe anything you tell me! What have you been doing now?"

He drew his chair a little closer to hers, and lowered his voice to a more confidential tone. "Rosamund, I'm a misunderstood man," he said, mournfully. "Whenever I try to do anything for you, people seem to turn against me. Now there's Cecilia—look at those shoulders, will you? Did you ever see anything so frigid? Make me feel as if there's a draught on my neck, just to look at them. That's the way she treats me, ever since I told her to let Flood alone, because he's your preserve!"

Rosamund laughed; the mystery was made clear. "Good gracious, Marshall! You never did that?"

But he pretended the utmost seriousness. "That wasn't all," he declared. "One day I tried to jolly Benny along, cheer him up a bit, you know! He'd

The LAND of CONTENT

been so awfully down. I tried to tell him something about the best fruit hanging high, that there was nothing like perseverance, and all that sort of thing. He told me to mind only my own business. Yes, he really did, Rose! Wasn't it perfectly shocking of him? I told him it was, and he said he'd like to knock some sense into me. That's when I suggested his going off and shooting things."

"You had a fortunate escape," she said dryly.

"Yes, hadn't I?" he agreed. "But something disagreeable always happens when I try to do you a kindness, Rose! There was that chap Ogilvie; he seemed to turn against me from the moment I put him wise."

At the unexpected mention of the name, her heart seemed to stand still; but a flash of insight warned her that she was upon the clue to the mystery that had so tormented her. She managed to smile at Pendleton, and to ask, "How was that?"

"Oh, that last afternoon, you know, you've no idea how well you and Benny looked, seated up there on that red blanket. I called Ogilvie's attention to it—awfully hard to make conversation with a fellow like him, you know. I said something about you and Flood being well suited to each other, and he seemed rather surprised, and actually had the nerve to ask me what I meant. The way he spoke, or something,

The LAND of CONTENT

put it into my head that he—er—he—well, that I would be doing you a good turn by telling him a thing or two. I did."

"What?" she managed to ask, to his dramatic pause.

"Oh, I believe I said that you and Flood must be finding it very good to be together these few days; that of course nothing had been announced yet, and something of that sort. I remember he said I must be misinformed, which quite provoked me. A fellow doesn't like to be contradicted, you know. What? I assured him I was in a position to know, and threw in a word or two about your—er—millions being joined to Benny's, or something of that sort. Most combative chap, Ogilvie! Tried to tell me that a woman of your type would not be likely to stay up in the mountains so far from a fiancé. 'Pon my word, I almost thought the fellow must be really hit, himself! I said he probably hadn't had much experience with women of your type; never can tell what freak you girls will take to next. Oh, we had quite a word or two, I assure you. Ended in his being huffy. Wouldn't walk up the hill beside me, and all that, you know. What?"

Rosamund was never more grateful in her life than to the unsuspecting man whose coming into the box ended Pendleton's chatter. During the rest of

The LAND of CONTENT

the evening she dared not let herself think of his revelations. On the way home, however, she made herself sure of the truth of part of them.

"What happened between Marshall and Mr. Flood?" she asked Cecilia.

Mrs. Maxwell gave an exclamation of impatience. "Oh, my dear! Marshall has been altogether too insufferable! Mr. Flood has spoiled him. He got to the point where he thought he owned Mr. Flood. Oh, yes, there was a fight, of course." She raised her eyebrows towards Yetta, who, opposite them, was peering out at the receding street-lights with eyes still bright with wonder. Rosamund, catching the signal, said,

"It is perfectly safe to talk."

Then Cecilia, rather more circumstantially than Pendleton, told her of the triangular quarrel. "And now," she said, "Marshall is absurd enough to think I mind his dangling after that Mrs. Halley! She's welcome to him! Did he happen to say where Mr. Flood had gone?"

"He said he had gone west to shoot things," Rosamund told her, and Cecilia became very thoughtful. Later, while Rosamund was undressing, she came into her room, and said,

"Rose, the Whartons have asked me to go on their yacht to the Mediterranean. If you are sure

The LAND of CONTENT

you will not need me for a month or two I believe I'll go."

They talked for a while of plans, with no mention of Flood. Rosamund had small difficulty in adding the sum of two and two; it was plain enough that her sister had accepted the hint of the defeat of any hopes she might have had, and now was aiming somewhere else; but Cecilia, in a blue negligée, her hair down and her cheeks still delicately flushed, looking intently at the toe of her silver slipper, was bewitchingly pretty, and she had not the heart to laugh. When Rosamund announced her intention of leaving New York next morning, Cecilia, in turn, ignored any suspicions she might have had. She even offered to keep Yetta for a week, to take her to the master who was to hear her voice, to find the suitable governess, and to send her back in the governess's charge before she sailed. She had taken a strange liking to the girl; perhaps the adoration in the black eyes had something to do with it.

Then, at last, Rosamund was alone. Do we ever, she wondered, look back upon our doubts and misunderstandings, when once they are dissolved, with anything but scorn and disgust for our own stupidity, our blindness? Pendleton's part in the affair was too mean to be given a second thought. Such people, she supposed, there must be, content to feed upon the

The LAND *of* CONTENT

crumbs of society, winning their way by their very silliness, which amuses more by its vociferous nonsense than by inherent wit. She could dismiss him as a meddler, knowing him too well to credit him with worse intentions; he was not bad at heart, and she knew that he would not have been merely spiteful toward herself. He had meant her no harm. It was her own part in it, and above all Ogilvie's, that were hard to think about. It was not for the woman to move with courage high enough to overcome misunderstandings; it was Ogilvie who had failed there. He at least had known what Pendleton had said, while she had been unaware of it. After that hour of wordless revelation, she asked herself, how could he have doubted her? In their walks and drives she had been so sincerely herself with him, had given him so many opportunities of knowing her character—even, she blushing told herself, of knowing her heart. Was it possible that any man, after that, could so misunderstand her as to believe her capable of such deception? How could he have believed her engaged to Flood? Yet she realized that if he did indeed believe it, he would not have pressed his own claims. Whatever his feeling for her, he would not have tried to win her from the friend whom he placed so high, whom he knew to be so worthy a man, for whom he had told her that he would make any sacri-

The LAND *of* CONTENT

fice. She was sorely wounded; yet there was that quality in her blood which refused to be vanquished. It would have been natural enough to scorn him for his doubt, to punish him for his neglect, to condemn him for his lack of courage, when a word or two, scarcely a question, would have made everything clear between them. To blame him, she told herself, would be the easier way. But her courage was higher than that. Beyond every other consideration, she knew very well that she must give precedence to the love that was in his heart and hers.

She recalled Mother Cary's words, "I reckon there's a door o' distrust most of us has to pass through, before we can stand in the land where there's only content, an' love, an' trust." Her heart warmed anew to the wise, tender old woman whose wisdom was large and loving enough to illumine every shadow.

She fell asleep pondering upon it all, and carried the same thoughts with her to the train next morning. She left New York before Yetta was awake, having said farewell to a very drowsy and very charming Cecilia.

It seemed strange that here the busy life of the city could be rushing on, crowding and grinding and shrieking, while there, in her mountains, as she knew so well, only quiet stretches of snow and lines of black

The LAND of CONTENT

pinetrees and bare treetops, only the sun and the stars, only the few slowly moving people, an old white mare bringing home a tired man, the call of the man or boy crossing the fields, the lowing of cattle from the barnyards—only these made up the world! Here every second was crowded with activity; the deeper workings of human hearts were drowned in noise. There, nothing ever hastened; life matured normally, like the winter wheat; grew slowly, and to a largeness impossible in the cities.

She had forgotten that the trains, in winter, were less frequent. She missed the last one, and had to spend the night in Baltimore, and make a late start the next morning. She had been thinking, thinking, during every waking moment since the hour of Pendleton's disclosure, and in the station she bought an armful of papers and magazines; even pictures of criminals, financiers and actresses were better company than her own thoughts! There was no Pullman car on the train in winter, and she welcomed the changing company of the day-coach; but passengers happened to be few, and she was soon forced to take up her papers.

She was no exception among the women of her sort; newspapers made uninteresting reading. She looked first with a slight distrust at the flaring headlines on the front page, then turned to the social notes.

The LAND of CONTENT

Those exhausted, an advertisement or two caught her attention; and then there seemed to leap at her the words: "TOBET FREE." She read, almost at a glance, the short paragraph which followed.

"The Federal authorities have failed to obtain sufficient evidence to convict Joseph Tobet, of Long Mountain, of the charge of illicitly distilling the so-called 'White Lightning.' Tobet had been under suspicion for some months, and was arrested last October, but the charge against him has been dismissed, and the man was set at liberty yesterday."

The paper dropped to her feet. She wondered what effect this would have upon Grace, and remembered the note of warning. But, just from New York as she was, such doubts or fears seemed too utterly trivial to be of account. Joe might threaten, Doctor Ogilvie might shake his head, and Grace, poor soul, might tremble; but the arm of the law was, after all, a sure protection. There was really nothing that Joe could do; and she dismissed the thought of him for the more welcome one of Ogilvie.

The day before, her impatience had been boundless. She had not doubted that she should seek him out at once, as the most courageous thing to do, tell him what Pendleton had said, and of Flood's absence in the West; that, she told herself, would surely be enough. He would then understand.

The LAND of CONTENT

But to-day, as she drew nearer the end of her journey, her resolution faltered. He had been stupid; his doubts had wronged her; his restraint, if such it had been, was unfair to them both, and had stolen something from their love which there would never be time enough to replace. It was not the woman's part to offer apologies; it was the man's part to have faith, or, at the very worst, to seek explanation. If he could so deny himself, if her love was so small a thing to him that he could bring himself to do without it, was it for her to urge it upon him?

Her revulsion of feeling went still farther. Life, she told herself, was after all pretty much the same, wherever it was lived. To give happiness to Eleanor and Tim, to care for Yetta—that was what had justified her spending the winter in the mountains; she could have done as much in town. If she had not found sincerity of purpose and singleness of aim among her earlier friends, it was because she had not learned to look for it. She had only chosen the easier part, not the higher; it was easier to be sincere and simple in the mountains than in town where life was more crowded. It was she who had been at fault in not finding in the old life what was more plainly to be seen in the new; she was so small a creature that she could not reach high purpose through confusing interventions, but must have it laid before her in bare-

The LAND *of* CONTENT

ness and singleness. And what was, in truth, her feeling for this man who could so readily doubt her, or, at the very least of his offending, hold himself aloof from her through any consideration whatever? Aside from his belief in her baseness, had he not been willing to sacrifice her for his friend? Would not love, such love as she felt herself worthy of receiving, have put aside without a thought of misgiving anything and everything but the glory and necessity of its own demands?

All the way her mind was busy with such problems of its own making. The journey seemed long. She told herself that her impatience was only to end it, to reassure herself by the sight of him; yet the impatience was there. It was mid-afternoon when she alighted, remembering her last return. She wondered whether White Rosy would be there, and bent, on her way down the car, to look along the platform.

But the only familiar form was the important person who combined the functions of station master, storekeeper and retailer of news. He grinned when he saw her, and came towards her with unusual alacrity.

“Well, I declare,” he said, “got the news a’ready, have ye? Bad news sho’ly does travel fast!”

She stood still and looked at him. His eyes

The LAND of CONTENT

brightened still more when he perceived that he was to be the first to inform her.

“Why, ain’t ye heard?” he cried. “Yer house was burnt down to the groun’ las’ night. Thought ye was in it, the doctor did. That’s how he so nigh got killed.”

XXI

THERE are some hours of human experience so intense with suffering that they return, again and again, living themselves over in the memory, arising in the small hours of the night—haunting specters of pain, meeting us unexpectedly in an unguarded moment of solitude to open and reopen the wounds they have left, following us on through the years with a recurring vindictiveness of pain almost as keen as when it was first inflicted. Joy, happiness, exaltation of spirit, return only in new guises; they, too, make their impression upon the memory, but otherwise. The shock of loss, the agony of parting, the fear and dread of the suffering of loved ones, the bitterness of self-reproach, the message of loss—these are the things that return and return again; and of such as these were the hours of that afternoon to Rosamund. Not only on that first night, once more in the small upper room at Mother Cary's, but often and often during her after life did the shock and agony of those hours return to her.

Past the form of the station master, gloating in his satisfaction at being the first to tell her the evil news, she had seen Father Cary's familiar form de-

The LAND *of* CONTENT

scending from his wagon. She scarcely remarked his surprise at her being there, his disappointment that Doctor Blake and the nurse had not come on that train, his helping her into the wagon, and his description of the events of the night before. The drive past the dull little houses and the store, the closed cottages, the big hotels with their uncurtained windows staring like eyeless sockets, the woods, the glimpses of the path where she had faced John Ogilvie; the turn at last toward the brown cottage she had come to love so dearly; the blackened, smoking hole that alone remained of it; then the half mile farther to the house where Ogilvie lay—those were the moments of most intense pain, because of their suspense.

The story was simple enough. The little household had gone to bed early, and toward midnight Grace had awakened with a whispering fear of smoke. She roused the others, and Eleanor had bundled sleepy Tim in blankets, thrown other bed covering out of a window, and gone quietly down with Grace. Matt and Sue, wild with fear, rushed out ahead of them, shouting, and their cries aroused the nearest neighbors. Country folk come quickly to a fire, although there is seldom anything to do but watch and surmise; a small crowd gathered in an incredibly short time, and a few things were rescued from the

The LAND of CONTENT

blazing house. In spite of the pleading of the women, Grace stayed to watch the flames, wringing her hands, and calling Rosamund's name. Eleanor was half frantic herself, with the alternate efforts at calming Timmy and beseeching Grace to go away. But Grace, loving and faithful, was crying at the loss of the house and the things in it that had seemed to her so beautiful, and that were so dear because they belonged to Rosamund. She could not be persuaded to leave, but stood wringing her hands and saying, over and over,

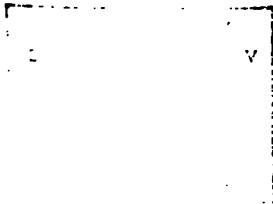
“ Oh, Miss Rose! Oh, Miss Rose! ”

After the first alarm, Aunt Sue became calm enough to tell the questioners that all were safe, that Miss Randall and Yetta were in New York. But the man who was urging White Rosy up the long road from the valley, the man who, at last, came running, stumbling, panting up to the little band of watchers, who heard Grace Tobet calling a beloved name and sobbing, did not wait for explanation. He looked among them for one face, and found it missing; then he rushed into the blazing house.

There were brave men who, for the sake of all he had done for their women and children, went after him; there were strong arms to bear him to the nearest shelter, and loving hands to tend him. It was not long before Mother Cary came, bundled up in the



“A small crowd gathered in an incredibly short time.”



PROPERTY
OF THE
NEW YORK
BOTANICAL GARDEN

The LAND of CONTENT

wagon beside her big husband, to take command of everything.

So short and simple a story of a ruin so great! Rosamund sat dumbly in the kitchen of the little house where Ogilvie lay, while Mother Cary told her, braced beside her on the little padded crutch, her tender old hands smoothing the girl's hair, the sweet old voice speaking words of courage and hope.

"Pap's done telegraphed for Doctor 'Blake," she said, "him that's his friend, him that sent Yetta up here. He's an eye doctor, but he'll know everything to do for everything else as well. We reckoned he'd come on this train. That's how come Pap was there to meet it. Howsomever, he'll be here before the day's out, you mark me; an' he'll say jest what I'm sayin'—John ain't goin' to die. He's a goin' to get well."

Rosamund looked up at her, and the old woman understood. "I wouldn't, ef I was you, darlin', honey! No, now don't ye go thinkin' that a way; it ain't that he's burnt so bad, 'cause he ain't. Hair grows quick, an' that did get sco'ched a leetle mite. I reckon all ails him is thet he breathed in the smoke."

Half-remembered tales of horror passed through the girl's mind, and she hid her face in her hands.

"Oh, well, honey, ef you goin' to take on about it, maybe you better jest come to the door and peek

The LAND *of* CONTENT

in at him. I guess when all's said an' done you got more right than anybody else."

"Ah, no," Rosamund cried, "no, I have not!"

But Mother Cary touched her cheek. "Honey, he wouldn't 'a' gone into the house that a way ef so be it he hadn't 'a' thought all he loved best in the world was there. A body don't go into flames for nothin'! An' it wasn't no ways like the doctor to lose his head—now was it? You come right along in here with yo' Ma Cary."

As long as she lived Rosamund could recall that room—the dingy white walls, the oval braided rug upon the floor; the tiny looking-glass and little corner washstand; the bureau with its characteristic assortment of shaving things, a stethoscope and a small photograph in a plush frame of a woman dressed in the fashion of thirty years before; the bedstead of turned yellow wood, the bright patchwork quilt over the feather-bed—and Ogilvie's form lying there, his flushed face, his heavy breathing, his restless hands.

The woman who was watching beside his bed arose, and Rosamund crossed the narrow space. She bent over him a little, put out her hand, but shrank back, restrained perhaps by the fear of an emotion which threatened to be too strong for her.

She turned, went blindly from the little room, and

The LAND of CONTENT

Pa Cary led her out to the wagon. If he talked to her on the way to his house she did not hear him. Tim saw them coming, and ran to meet her. The pressure of his warm little arms about her neck, in the "tight squeeze" that he usually reserved for Eleanor, did more than anything else to bring her back to a normal state of mind.

But after his first embrace, Tim wanted to go to the stable with Father Cary. Eleanor was standing in the little familiar doorway, under the overhanging roof made by the upper floor. She waited, as if spell-bound, while Rosamund walked slowly up the path to the house; it was the look on the girl's face that held her back, for her heart was reaching out in sympathy. At last Rosamund stood before her, and they looked into each other's eyes; then Eleanor opened her arms wide, and with a sob drew Rosamund to her.

"Oh, my sweet, my Rose!" she cried, her tears on Rosamund's cold cheek. "I knew! I knew! I knew it was John! But he'll get well, darling. He will live for your sake!"

But Rosamund went past her into the house, looked about the little familiar room as if she had never seen it before, and seated herself in a chair near the table.

Eleanor took off her hat and unfastened her coat

The LAND of CONTENT

as if she had been a child, instead of the stricken woman that she was; Rosamund looked up at her in a dumb agony of appeal.

Eleanor repeated the story she had already heard from Father Cary; at the end she paused, hesitated, and said,

“But there is one thing more that you’ve got to know, Rose. The house was set on fire.”

Rosamund looked up at her, as if waiting.

“Oh, don’t look like that, my darling! Try to understand! Someone set fire to the house—it’s so cruel to have to tell you!”

Suddenly Rosamund’s face changed from its blankness to a look of horror.

“Then—if—I—had gone away, as he wanted me to—Oh! Eleanor, then he would not——”

But Eleanor’s arms were around her. “Don’t, Rosamund! Don’t let yourself do that! There’s not one of us could live and be sane, if we dwelt on our ‘ifs’!”

“But it is true!”

“It is not true. It is not! Because there was no ‘if’; there could not have been! You had to stay; you had to obey your own reasoning, not his. We all have to decide for ourselves. It is when we don’t, that we get into trouble. I can assure you of

The LAND of CONTENT

that, I of all others. I married because I was told it was the best thing to do—but you must forget I told you that!”

At least it brought Rosamund to a thought of something else. “Eleanor!” she exclaimed, her hand reaching out towards her friend.

But it was not the moment for Eleanor to think of herself. “Rose, listen to me,” she said. “Someone set fire to the house. There is no doubt of that. Now you will have to make up your mind what to do—there will have to be an inquiry, they say.”

“Why?”

“Why? Because the people who look after those things will want to find out who did it. They will want to fix the blame.”

“But I don’t understand! It is my house! What difference does it make to anyone else?”

“And you don’t care?”

Rosamund arose, and mercifully burst into tears. “Oh, Eleanor!” she sobbed, “how can you ask me that? Do you think I care for the mere loss of a few sticks and stones and things, when he——”

Again Eleanor’s comforting arms were around her, and Eleanor’s hand on her hair. “Oh, you darling! I knew you’d say that! I knew you would! They cannot do anything without your consent!”

The LAND of CONTENT

Apparently in relief from some doubt or fear, she even laughed. Rosamund looked at her in amazement.

“What on earth do you mean?” she began.

But before there could be time for explanation the door opened, and Father Cary brought his little wife into the room in his arms, and set her down in a chair.

Mother Cary always brought an atmosphere of happiness with her, but this time, it seemed to Rosamund, she was also the personification of all that was angelic and beautiful, a messenger of hope, a bearer of glad tidings.

“Well,” she began, as soon as Pap had set her down and unbundled her, “they come! My, that young woman knows jest how to go about things! I been nursin’ all my life, seems like, and that girl can’t be more than twenty-five; but the way she took a holt o’ things did beat me! My! I wasn’t one bit worried at leavin’ him with her, not one bit! An’ Doctor Blake’s goin’ to set up all night.”

She smiled into Rosamund’s beseeching eyes.

“Doctor Blake says they ain’t a doubt but he’ll be all right in no time!” she said, and mentally asked forgiveness for stretching the truth. “He says his eyes ain’t hurt a bit, far as he can tell, an’ it’s only the smoke got into them, that’s all. An’ anybody

The LAND of CONTENT

knows that ain't much! Land! Think how many smokin' chimbls there be, an' nobody givin' a thought to 'em!"

It was not until after supper, when Tim had been sent to bed, rather joyful than otherwise in his excitement over the return to the Carys', and Eleanor was trying to put him to sleep by telling him a story, that Rosamund went upstairs to the room that had been Yetta's, to be alone with her thoughts. She was never one of those, usually members of a large family, who can take council with themselves while others are in the room; she needed solitude, if she would adjust herself and set the chambers of her mind in order. Now she had much to think of, for the events of the past three days had been incongruous enough. She smiled as she remembered that, scarcely forty-eight hours before, she had been sitting in an opera box listening to Pendleton's inanities; but there was no smile when she thought of Ogilvie.

Presently she was aware, through the silence, of a timid hand on the door. She had scarcely had time to do more than speak to Grace, who had sat, through the earlier part of the evening, as if turned to stone; now something told her she was there.

Grace, white and wan, came over the threshold and threw her arms about her friend, resting her head on Rosamund's shoulder. For a few moments they

The LAND of CONTENT

stood so, clasped in the sympathy that women convey to each other in that silent manner. Then Grace released herself a little, looked into Rosamund's face, and whispered.

"Miss Rose, *he* did it!"

Rosamund's thoughts had been of Ogilvie alone; for a moment she did not understand. Then Eleanor's words came back to her; and all the while she protested, she knew the truth of what Grace said.

But, out of pity, protest she must. "Oh, no, Grace! No! Don't think that! Don't let yourself think it!"

But Grace, even whiter than before, met her eyes steadily. "I don't have to think it," she said, quietly. "I know it. You know it, too."

At the agony in the poor creature's eyes Rosamund forgot all her own. "No," she cried, almost aloud. Their lowered voices in the silence of the house seemed to add to the horror of it. "No, I do not know, and neither do you! Don't say it, Grace. Don't think it. Grace! Oh, my poor, dear Grace!"

But Grace shook her head impatiently, as if it were not the time for sympathy. She clasped Rosamund's two hands, looked at her intently, and said, "Miss Rose, I tell you I don't have to think; I know!"

Rosamund gasped, but Grace went on. "I saw

The LAND of CONTENT

him from my window, an' Rob Tobet and Nels' Dunn were with him. They were skulkin' in the shadow, but I made 'em out. It was the first time I'd seen Joe, since—the first time, and to see him that a way!"

"Grace!" Rosamund cried. Grace might have held her hand in a flame, and seemed to suffer less. Rosamund thought it was more than she could bear to witness. But Grace went on ruthlessly,

"They were watchin' and watchin' the house; an' after a while I saw Joe wavin' his arms at the other two, an' then they went off. It wasn't very long after that—maybe half an hour or so—that I smelled smoke. An', Miss Rose, when we got down an' out, I saw what nobody else seemed to take any notice of—I saw three corners of the house all blazin' up at the same time."

Rosamund had drawn her down to the side of the bed; now Grace paused, grasped Rosamund's hand, bent towards her, and whispered, hoarsely,

"Miss Rose, houses don't catch on fire that a way less'n somebody sets 'em!"

They looked at each other mutely for what seemed an eternity, sharing and accepting the horrid significance of it. At last Rosamund, shaking off the spell with a sharp indrawing of the breath, drew Grace to her, held her, everything else forgotten save that here was an agony greater than her own.

The LAND of CONTENT

For a long hour they sat there talking, planning. Grace was torn between her sense of righteousness and her love for Joe, fanned anew as it was by his present need of her protection.

"I thought I had stopped carin' for him," she whispered. "But this—this ain't like the—other thing—you know what I mean. That didn't hurt anybody but himself, and it wasn't anybody else's business, not the Gov'ment's nor anybody's. But this is different. They—they hang for this, I reckon!"

Rosamund shuddered. "Grace, no one must know of it! No one must know!"

"I heard Pap Cary say they was to be an inquiry."

"It is my house. I can stop anything of that sort. I have no insurance on it, and there will be no one to press the inquiry if I don't. No one must know, Grace."

For a moment Grace looked at her. Then she said, "But what if—*he* dies?"

Rosamund had forgotten her own anxiety in Grace's. Now, with a little moan of pain, she hid her face in her hands.

"That's the way," Grace whispered, hopelessly. "You're bound to see it different, when it's your own man."

They sat in silence for a while, each so occupied

The LAND of CONTENT

with thoughts of her own love as to forget all else. Presently Grace stood up, as if to admit that there was nothing further to be said. "Well," she sighed hopelessly.

But Rosamund stood up, too, and laid her hands on Grace's shoulders.

"No matter what happens, Grace, nobody must know that Joe was so much as seen near there."

"But supposin' Doctor Ogilvie——?"

"Not even then," Rosamund said, with white, trembling lips. "He has given all his thought to saving life. Do you think he would want——? No!"

But Grace shook her head. "I think Mis' Reeves suspicions," she said.

"She does," Rosamund said, "and she has already been warning me against the investigation. I know she wants to shield Joe."

But Grace's conscience was made all the keener by her reawakened love. "Well, I'm goin' to tell Ma Cary," she said. "She knows more'n all of us put together."

They stopped at Eleanor's door, and the three found Mother Cary alone in the room that was kitchen and dining-room and confessional, as need arose. Pap had gone back to the doctor's house, too anxious to remain away.

Mother Cary heard all Grace had to tell, asked

The LAND of CONTENT

a few questions of her and Eleanor, then sat with her worn old hands clasped in her lap, thinking it over.

Grace's attitude was one of hopeless waiting. Rosamund watched her, pitying; grief brings no outward beauty to the lowly, she thought, yet much—how much—of that beauty of soul which perishes not!

At last Mother Cary spoke. "Miss Rose is right," she said, looking at Grace. "Nobody must know what we know 'ceptin' jest our own selves. I wouldn't even say a word of it to Pap; 'cause the better men folks be, the more they hold on to the letter o' the law. An' fur as I can make out, this here is one o' the times when the letter o' the law is better forgotten. Tellin' on Joe ain't goin' to help Doctor Ogilvie any, that I can see, nor anybody else; an' there's jest a chanct that keepin' silence may help Joe."

"But Joe did it," Grace said. "I reckon he's man enough to take his punishment."

"I reckon he is," Mother Cary agreed. "He's a-takin' it right this minute, too, knowing what his act has done to the doctor. I sure do believe that's all the punishmint Joe needs. The other kind would be different, 'cause what he's done is done. I ain't never had time to puzzle out the whys an' whyfors o' lots o' things, punishmint among 'em; but one thing

The LAND of CONTENT

I know, an' have known ever sence the dear Lord entrusted me with little child'en o' my own. When punishmint is jest hittin' back, it don't do anybody a mite o' good. Less'n it helps 'em not to do it again, it ain't any use whatsoever. Better jest leave it in the hands o' the dear Lord, Who sees further'n we can, ef you ain't sure it's goin' to help, not hender. An' tellin' on Joe ain't goin' to help the doctor nor Joe neither, 'cause Joe ain't the kind that punishmint helps."

Again there was a silence, until Grace moved a little, unclasped and clasped her hands, and spoke. "I must go back to my own house," she said.

Rosamund, startled, was about to protest, but Mother Cary nodded. "Of course," she said, "he'll be needin' you awful bad now, honey."

And in spite of Rosamund's pleading, Grace refused Eleanor's offer to go with her, and took her way, alone, through the night, down the mountain, to her dark, lonely little house. Afterward, Rosamund often marveled at Mother Cary's allowing it, even urging it, for usually she was the gentlest of souls, protecting everyone, careful of everyone's comfort; and surely Grace was now in no condition to go.

But no more than Grace herself did Mother Cary hesitate. She hobbled about the kitchen, packing a little basket of food; she had Eleanor bring in one

The LAND of CONTENT

of Pap's lanterns, and lighted it; she bade Rosamund make Grace some tea, and forced the trembling creature to drink it; and at last she opened the door for her.

Grace started out, but came back into the room to kiss them, and they saw that she was smiling; it had been long since poor Grace had smiled!

"I'll go up to my chamber and wave the lantern when I get there, ef all's well," she told them. "An' I can always see your light, Ma Cary!"

They watched, standing shivering in the doorway, until her lantern disappeared at the bend of the road. Tim, aroused by their voices, cried out, and Eleanor went to him.

Mother Cary and Rosamund began to straighten the room, putting away the boxes and pails that had been opened for Grace's basket. Rosamund was so intent on her thoughts that she would not have noticed that her own cheeks were wet, if she had not seen Mother Cary's eyes brimming with tears. After a while she cried,

"Oh, I don't see how she can walk that far, and at night, too! Why wouldn't you let her wait for Pa Cary?"

The old woman shook her head. "Honey," she said, "ef all is as I make it out to be, Grace won't go all that way alone and un'tended. The woods

The LAND *of* CONTENT

around here have years an' eyes, an' ef her foot stumbles, there'll be someone there to hold her up, you mark my words."

"Oh, she is not strong enough!" the girl still protested.

Then Mother Cary leaned towards her, took the white hand in both her own, and asked, "Honey, ef 'twas *your* man, wouldn't *you* go?"

Rosamund threw back her head with a sob, and Mother Cary opened her arms.

XXII

FORTUNATELY for Rosamund the succeeding days were so busy that she had but little time to be alone with her thoughts of Ogilvie. The morning after Grace's departure, Father Cary had come home with disquieting news. Pneumonia had set in; but Doctor Blake would stay at the Summit until the crisis was passed, and he had sent for another nurse—the one who was at the head of his own private hospital, Pap proudly told Rosamund in a pitying attempt at reassuring her.

She had, first of all, to make some arrangement for Yetta. Cecilia rose to the occasion and found the suitable governess, who proved to be an elderly woman to whom Yetta took an immediate liking. Miss Gates had been something of a singer in her day, and she had a family of nieces and nephews that she was helping to bring up, all of whom were musical. She took Yetta with her to stay at their house until other plans could be made. Cecilia had, indeed, shown energy and good judgment, and something more; she sailed for the Mediterranean to join the Whartons at Algiers only after she saw Yetta

The LAND of CONTENT

installed in the Gates home—having been so good-natured as to let the yacht go without her in order to do so.

Matt and Aunt Sue were sent back to Georgia. Secretly they were quite reconciled to going, for they were to stop in Baltimore and replace their burned wardrobes with entire new ones, with which they looked forward to dazzling their friends in Augusta; but Sue felt obliged to use the prerogative of the negro servant to make a grumbling protest.

“ I suttinly wouldn’t ‘a’ journeyed ‘way up to dis yer Gord-fo’ saken corner ob de yearth,” she declared to Rosamund, “ whar dey ain’t nothin’ but a passel o’ Yankee white trash, ef I had ‘a’ known I was a goin’ to see my best Paisley shawl what Miss Lucy done give me when she was ma’ied bu’nt up wid flames befo’ my ve’y eyes. Et don’ do nobody no good traipsin’ aroun’ dis yer way, nohow. You better come along back home wid yer Aunt Susan, whar you b’longs at, chile.”

After they left, the routine of life was simple enough; yet the days were laden with what anxiety, what care, what fears, and trembling hopes! Yet living as she was on news from the doctor’s house, Rosamund was not altogether oblivious of what was passing in the hearts of her friends. She went every morning to the Tobet cottage, sometimes with Elea-

The LAND of CONTENT

nor, sometimes alone. For several days Grace watched and waited for one who did not come. But at last Rosamund made a suggestion, which in a day or two brought its return.

“You know the little boy who brought that note to us at the brown house, last fall,” she said to Grace. “Why not give him a note to Joe?”

“What to say?” Grace asked.

“That whatever happens, no one shall suspect him. Tell him you have my word, and Mother Cary’s, for that.”

“I’d be afraid to write words like those,” Grace said. “They might go to the wrong one—and then no need to tell!”

“Then say them over to the boy, and make him remember them,” said Rosamund; and that was the advice which Grace, in the desperate necessity of her heart, followed. A few mornings afterward, when Rosamund came in sight of the cottage, Joe was leaning against the door. He went inside when he saw her, and Rosamund turned back. She told herself that in Grace’s place she would want no visitors for a while.

But she had not gone far before Grace came hastening after her. She threw her arms about Rosamund’s neck.

“I got my man back,” she whispered. “I’m

The LAND of CONTENT

prayin' every minute to the good Lord, Miss Rose, that you'll get yours back, too, all safe an' sound."

But the secret of Eleanor's heart was not so readily disclosed, although Rosamund suspected, from the number of telegrams and letters that were coming, and from Eleanor's frequent look of abstraction, that she was beginning to have a good deal to think about. But how far matters had progressed, she did not suspect; for Eleanor's heart was troubled as it had never been, and she would not add to Rosamund's burden of care by confiding her own.

That she was suffering could not escape the keen eyes of Mother Cary, however.

"Ain't you troubled about somethin', dearie?" the old woman asked, one day when Rosamund and Tim were out of doors, and dinner was cooking, and they two were alone.

Eleanor looked at her dumbly; a quiver passed over her face, seeming to leave it whiter than ever.

"Land!" said Mother Cary. "Don't look that a way, honey! No wonder little Timmy used to call you 'White Lady'!"

She seated herself in the little chair with the legs that Father Cary had sawed off to suit her, and drew another up beside it.

The LAND of CONTENT

“Now you come set down here by your Ma Cary, lamb, an’ tell me what’s the matter.”

Eleanor seated herself, and put her hand on the old woman’s lap.

“I am in trouble, Mother Cary,” she said. “But it cannot do any good to talk about it.”

“Well, it cert’n’y don’t do one mite o’ good to let it eat in, dearie. It don’t make you die any sooner, much as you’d like to sometimes, when trouble is real bad; it don’t make you forget; nor it don’t show you any way out. It jest makes the way seem longer.”

“That is true,” Eleanor said. Then she pondered for a while. Presently she asked, “Do you remember Mr. Flood, Mother Cary?”

“The rich gentleman that run over Timmy? Yes, lamb, I always remember them I like.”

Eleanor smiled. “He did run over Timmy, didn’t he? Or run into him! So indirectly I owe him my precious baby!”

“And now he wants you to pay him?” the old woman asked.

“Put it that way!” Eleanor replied. “But I cannot pay him, Mother Cary—not as he wants me to! I—I may become blind, some day.”

Mother Cary’s hand tightened over hers. “Ain’t your poor eyes any better?” she asked.

The LAND of CONTENT

"Yes. Oh, yes, they are better. But I am afraid. Think of burdening a man with a blind wife! And—and he is such a splendid man, Mother Cary! He deserves the very best."

"I ain't doubtin' it. He's John Ogilvie's friend, and that's enough to satisfy me that he's worth a good deal."

They sat in silence for a while; then Mother Cary said, "Darlin', I'm a-goin' to tell you a little story. I ain't takin' it on me to advise you; but I jest want to tell you how, though you wouldn't guess it, maybe, I was once in the same kind of a shadder you be in now."

"Do tell me," Eleanor said.

"Well, when I was a little girl, lamb, I fell an' hurt my back, an' when I got better, two or three years afterward, I couldn't do nothin' but scabble aroun', not even as good as I can now. An' I growed all crooked. It didn't make much difference for a while, I was that glad to be movin' at all. But as I growed up an' the other girls began to go places, an' I couldn't an' wasn't asked to, it did seem to me I jest couldn't live at all. There wasn't anythin' to look for'ard to. Then my father died, an' I went into the tin shop.

"It wasn't nice work, an' the big machines like to scared me to death at first, 'n I got cut, 'n once one

The LAND of CONTENT

o' the girls near me got some of her fingers cut off. In winter I had to go before light in the mornin' an' stay workin' till long after dark. Then I had sech a cough, an' one spring I had to quit work. The doctor, he asked me if I hadn't any kin in the country, an' I not knowin' what he was aimin' at told him I didn't know o' none 'xcept Ma's own aunt 't I'd never seen nor wrote to.

“Unbeknownst to me the doctor he wrote up here an' found out 't Aunt Marthy was a-keepin' house for her husband's nephew, an' she wrote back 't I was to come up an' spend the summer in the mountains. I cried at first, for I hadn't ever seen the country an' I didn't know Aunt Marthy, an' I was jest afeared to come. But the doctor he put me on the train, an' when I got to the station over there it was most dark—'bout as dark as it is now, I guess. There was a man on the platform, 'n I thought he was the biggest man I'd ever seen. When he come up to me he said, 'Why, you *are* a little mite! Guess they haven't been feedin' you much where you come from.' He had a big quilt in the wagon, an' he jest wrapped me all up in it an' lifted me in like I was a baby. I was that tired an' scared, an' I hadn't ever been taken keer of before, an' I jest up an' cried. He didn't ask me what was the matter, but he jest laughed at me an' made fun o' me, an' said if I acted

The LAND of CONTENT

like a baby he'd treat me like one, 'n he patted my hand, 'n tucked me all up, 'n talked to me all the way home. When Aunt Marthy met us at the door an' he carried me in the house in his arms, he said to her, 'Well, now, Aunt Marthy,' he said, 'we've jest got a baby to keer for, an' I'm a-goin' to help you do it.' An', honey, there hasn't been a day sence then that he hasn't taken keer o' me.

"There never was a summer like that one; seems like I never had been alive before. I never knew before how spring come, but I found out that year, Jim showin' me the first bluebirds an' bringin' in flowers. I jest thought he was next to God A'mighty, honey, an' I never once give a thought to me bein' a woman an' he bein' a man. I hadn't never had none o' the good times girls have, an' I guess I had come to forget I *was* a girl. By the time end o' summer come, Jim had gotten in the way o' carryin' me out with him everywheres, out to the barn, out to the wood-lot, out to the fields where he was a-workin'. I had grown strong enough to get aroun' like I do now, but Jim jest carried me 'roun' like he'd done that 'irst night, an' Aunt Marthy 'n he wouldn't let me do a mite o' work.

"Then, when I'd got real well, I said somethin' one night about goin' back to the factory. We was at supper, an' Jim he jest put down his knife an'

The LAND of CONTENT

looked at me a minute. Aunt Marthy reached over an' put her hand over his, an' then he got up an' went out. I was that scared, not knowin' what I'd done, an' Aunt Marthy told me I'd better go out an' find him.

"So I up an' followed him, an' he was a-standin' outside, lookin' so big against that yaller sky, an' straight an' tall with his arms folded on his chest, a-frownin', with his lips drawn in like he does when somethin's upset him right smart.

"I touched him on the arm an' said, 'Jim!' an' with that he turned him right aroun' quick.

"An' then, after a bit, he set me down an' held on to my hands, an' told me how he wasn't goin' to let me go back to the city any more, 'n how it was goin' to be. I told him I wasn't fit for him, bein' crooked, an' he jest laughed at me an' fixed it all his way, 'n called Aunt Marthy out 'n told her. She laughed at him an' told him he was more of a baby 'n I ever was. He always was that bright an' willful, an' he didn't give me a chance to say anything. But the more he talked, the more I found I loved him, an' the more I loved him the harder I made up my mind 't he shouldn't tie himself to a cripple.

"So that night when they was asleep, I got up an' took the money I had for my ticket home, an' I started to walk to the station. You know how far

The LAND of CONTENT

that is. By time mornin' come I wasn't halfway. I went into an old barn an' hid all day. I heard 'em callin' me, an' I saw Jim go by on horseback, an' other men, too, huntin' for me.

"Lat the nex' night I started for the station again, an' I got there jest about daybreak, thinkin' I'd be in time for the early mornin' train. When I got up on the platform, there was Jim a-waitin' ! Course I jest set right down an' cried, but Jim he made me understand what he'd been through while I was hid, an' talked to me so right then and there that I never once after that doubted in my mind but what it would be right for me to marry him. An' honey, I haven't ever had reason to doubt it since. I scarcely ever remember bein' a cripple, 'xcept when I do get good an' mad sometimes at not bein' able to get aroun' as spry as other folks. Sometimes I think it's been a real comfort to Jim, an' better 't I was so.

"There's some folks as can't be happy 'nless they're doin' for somebody else; an' when it happens to be a man, an' he can do for what's his own, he's boun' to be a good deal better off than ef he had to go a-huntin' for somethin' to take up his mind. It grows on 'em, too. I don't ever regret bein' a cripple; my bein' helpless has been sech an occupation for Jim!"

The LAND *of* CONTENT

The door had opened while she was saying the last words, and Timmy burst in, joyous and cold, to climb into Eleanor's lap and begin to pour forth an account of the mild adventures of his walk. But Eleanor, taking off his coat and leggings, hushed him. Mother Cary looked up at Rosamund and smiled.

"So you and Timmy had a fine walk, did ye? Well, I'm real glad. It'll do you good to get out, honey-bud. I was jest tellin' Mis' Reeves how-come Pap and me got married!"

"I'm goin' to get married to my muvver when I grows up," said Tim.

Rosamund smiled back at Mother Cary; but her smiles had lost their old merriment. The old woman went on:

"I was jest a-sayin' how Pap built this house for me jest like I wanted it, an' we come into it when we were married. Aunt Marthy lived here with us tell she died. Pap's made my flower beds every spring, an' I've planted the seeds. Seems like it's been that a way in everything. Pap does most o' the work, but I never get a chance to forget how glad he is 't I'm here. Whensoever he comes in all worned out, he always knows where to find me, me not bein' able to get far away; 'n I've never seen the time 't he didn't feel fresh an' strong again after he'd set an' talked a spell, an' had a bite o' somethin' I'd fixed for him. I ain't never been afear'd to show him

The LAND *of* CONTENT

how much I loved him. When the children was little 'an toddlin' aroun', they'd run to meet him an' hang aroun' him, but he always looked over their heads to me first. When John was married an' went away, an' I felt so bad, Pap jest used to laugh at me; an' when Lizzie got married, too, an' went off with her husband, Pap jest said he'd have me all to himself again. The time when the child'en were little was best to me, but I know the best time to Pap is whenever he can find somethin' to be a-doin' for me."

The sweetness of her words seemed to fall on them all like a blessing; for a while no one spoke; but to Rosamund, watching Eleanor, it seemed as if the lovely face were slowly melting from its usual sadness to a rosy glow. As she looked, Eleanor put the child down from her lap and knelt before Rosamund.

"Rose, my sweet," she said, her voice a song of love and tenderness, "would you think me deserting you, if I went to New York to-morrow?"

Rosamund half divined something of her meaning; she took Eleanor's face between her palms, looking into the eyes that were glowing as she had never seen them.

"Eleanor!" she cried.

Mother Cary gave a low laugh of delight. "Here, Timmy," she said, "you come with Ma Cary an' see what I got in the pantry!"

XXIII

DURING the first week of Ogilvie's illness Rosamund went once or twice to the house at the Summit where he lay. Doctor Blake had heard the story of the fire, and in the deliberate courtesy of his manner Rosamund suspected a veiled distrust; she imagined that he was wondering, whenever he looked at her, what manner of woman it was for whom Ogilvie had risked his life, and whether she were worthy of his possible sacrifice. She told herself that she would have felt the same, in his place; while, in her humility, she secretly reiterated her own unworthiness. But she knew herself guiltless of actual blame or wrongdoing, and found it hard to endure Doctor Blake's scrutiny, which seemed both to accuse and weigh and find wanting. Yet even that was easier to bear than the tolerant manner of the young woman in the white dress and coquettish cap, who came out of Ogilvie's room to assure her, with the tolerant air that seems to be an attribute of street-car conductors, policemen and trained nurses, that there was really no immediate prospect of change in the patient's condition, as pneumonia had to run its definite course.

For all the longing of her heart, and for all the

The LAND of CONTENT

courage with which she started out, Rosamund allowed herself to be snubbed into retreat. Mother Cary alone braved the authoritative one whenever she pleased, or whenever Pap would take her across the valley; and it was on the ninth night after the fire that she did what Rosamund and Ogilvie always declared to be the most merciful and courageous act of all her beautiful life.

"Now," she said, after supper, when Pap had gone out to the barn to harness the horse for his nightly pilgrimage, "Now, honey, this bein' the night when he'll come to, or—when he'll come to, surely—don't you think he ain't goin' to come to, 'cause he is—and you're goin' over with Pap to be there!"

Rosamund rose from her place beside the table, her hands clasped against her heart, pale, then flushed, then pale again.

Mother Cary looked up at her. "Darlin', come here to yo' Ma Cary," she said, and, when the girl knelt beside her, she put her arms about her and laid her withered, soft old cheek against Rosamund's hair.

"Honey," she said, "Ma Cary knows how you're feelin'! You're a young maid, an' by words unasked; but he's your man, an' you're his woman, in the sight o' God and the knowledge o' your own hearts. Ain't it so? Yes—but don't cry, my lamb! Don't cry like

The LAND of CONTENT

that! This ain't the time to cry. Look at me, dearie! That's right! Well, I didn't tell you to go, before to-night, because I knew 'twasn't for the best; but now your place is over there, alongside o' him. Let him open his eyes on you, ef so be it he is to open them knowin'ly in this world again. An' ef he ain't to be permitted to do that—then, my lamb, it's for you to be there to close 'em. There! That's right! Put it all back—grief keeps, an' maybe you won't need it, after all. Sho'! Hyear me talkin'! Why, I jest downright know you won't need it!"

Rosamund lifted her white, white face. "But——" she began.

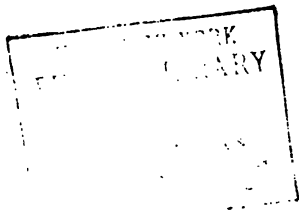
"I know what you're thinkin'," Mother Cary said. "I once thought that a way, too, befo' Pap made me see what was right. Put all sech doubts away from you. Your love an' his love are worth more than that. Look Ma Cary in the face, lamb, an' tell me—ain't they? There, there, now don't let the tears rise up again. You ain't got time for tears to-night."

"But the nurse—Doctor Blake—what will they—Oh, how can I?"

"It'll be all right with Doctor Blake. He knows you're comin'! An' as for the nurse, she's a paid hirelin', and you're his woman. Jest you bear that in mind, honey—hurry, there's Pap's wheels!"



“It was Rosamund whose eyes smiled into his.”



PROPERTY
OF THE
NEW-YORK
SOCIETY LIBRARY

The LAND of CONTENT

So it came to pass, in that critical hour before dawn when souls so often waver upon the threshold of life, when John Ogilvie's breathing became less labored and his eyes opened—tired, to be sure, but with unmistakable consciousness in them—it was Rosamund who was bending over him, while the strange woman in the white gown and cap looked at him, felt his pulse, smiled as if satisfied, and went out and closed the door behind her. It was Rosamund whose eyes smiled into his with the pitiful, brave effort of trying to make believe that there had never been any danger at all to frighten her. His hand moved toward her, his lips formed her name; and it was Rosamund's warm palm which closed over his hand, and her cheek which rested against his as he went to sleep.

XXIV

IT was late April, and the snow was gone from the mountains save in a few sheltered places under some rock or overhanging tangle of roots. In the valley the apple trees were abloom; in the woods the dogwood was falling; the roadsides were turning from mellow brown to green, here and there carpeted with violets; a line of emerald showed where some willows caressed the stream. Great puffs of cloud floated slowly across the deep blue of the sky, their cool shadows passing reluctantly over the plowed fields, the few bright patches of wheat, and the brown ribbon of road—gray in summer and lately white with snow—that wound up from the lowland. Even the weather-worn buildings bore signs of spring. Barn doors were thrown back, and little calves tied in the barn yards protested their infant loneliness; while from upper windows of the houses, windows that had been kept closed during all the long winter, flapping curtains waved outward to the breeze.

Two months and more had passed since the night when John Ogilvie returned to consciousness to find the face he loved bending above him, and on this particular morning Father Cary had driven Rosamund

The LAND *of* CONTENT

to the post office at the Summit, on his way to sell a calf, and she was taking a leisurely homeward way, reading, as she went, the handful of letters the mail had brought her. Every now and then the betraying fragrance of arbutus lured her from the road to little excursions among the trees. Sometimes she looked up at the flash of a brilliant wing, or stopped to listen to an outburst of bird-music. It was plain to be seen that she was living in the hour; the present satisfied; she was taking it as unquestioningly as a child, caring neither to hasten its passing nor to hold it back. To past and future she was giving no thought; the moment was enough.

She smiled often over her letters.

Yetta's was a pæon of joy. She had been for two months under the care of the governess chosen by Mrs. Maxwell, working hard at all her lessons, devouring them, Rosamund thought—and going twice a week to an advanced pupil of a great master for singing lessons. She wrote that she had just received a letter from Mrs. Flood, saying that when the master declared her ready to study in Paris or Berlin, she would make it possible for her to go. "How funny it seems," she wrote, "to call dear Mrs. Reeves by that name!"

There was a long envelope from an architect, enclosing various blue-prints which she tried to unfold,

The LAND of CONTENT

but which so resisted the breeze that they were soon put back for later inspection. There was a thin letter from Cecilia, bearing a foreign stamp, which Rosamund read more than once, with varying emotions. It ran:

DEAR ROSAMUND:

Your letter has made me very happy. I had no right to expect anything from Colonel Randall's will, although he was always so good to me that I thought of him as a father. But I was hurt, and it would be foolish not to admit that I was disappointed, when I found that he had left me nothing. So was mamma; it was not easy for us to be dependent upon you. I don't mean to hurt you in saying that. Especially now! Because, Rose, dear, you have made me see that my stepfather was right when he left everything to you. He could trust you!

You have really been magnificent. Your gift—for that is what it is—will make the world a different place for me. I had to go to bed for two days after I got your letter. I was overcome!

Now I do hope you won't be too much surprised, dear, and I don't want you to disapprove. I suppose you know that Mr. Flood sent over his yacht, the *Esperanza*, so that it would be ready for Kiel. But perhaps you don't know that he told Marshall to make use of it until he wanted it himself. Well, he did; it was nice of him, wasn't it? So Marshall brought it to Algiers, and the Whartons—and I—saw a good deal of him. It is all over now, so I

The LAND *of* CONTENT

may as well confess that Marshall and I were very unhappy for a time. We didn't have five thousand a year between us! But when I got your letter, and the papers—and the note from the bank—oh, Rosamund, you will never, never know how the world changed for me. And we were married yesterday, at the American Consulate in Lisbon, and I am your happy, happy, happy sister,

CECILIA PENDLETON.

Rosamund held the letter to her heart, when she had read it; it was all just as she had hoped. She wondered what Ogilvie would say—but that could wait!

The last letter was in Eleanor's handwriting.

MY OWN DEAR ROSE:

Your letter told me nothing that I was not prepared for. But I don't know how to put into words even a small part of my hopes for you. John is—excepting my own dear husband—the best man in the world. You will be happy, and proud, as I am happy and proud; we both send our love, and wish we might be with you on that beautiful morning that is coming so soon. But we cannot, for almost as soon as we get back to New York from this lovely Columbia Valley we shall have to sail for Europe. So we can only send our love, my darling; and Timmy is sending something else by express.

I am so happy that I cannot help wondering

The LAND of CONTENT

whether this is really myself; yet ever and always, sweet, I know that I am I—YOUR ELEANOR.

Rosamund had kept that letter to read last; and as she folded it back into its envelope there were tears in her eyes, so that for a moment she did not see the familiar figure of a white horse, that was coming upon her with the gentle ambling trot that White Rosy fell into when her master was in one of his absent-minded moods. It was a sort of up-and-downness of a trot, one of Rosy's great achievements. Ogilvie always said that it was worthy of everyone's admiration, since it made a remarkably good effect with the minimum of effort.

When she had come up to the place where Rosamund waited, White Rosy stopped of her own accord, edged toward the side of the road, and began to nibble at the young green things already burgeoning there.

Ogilvie looked, without speaking, at the girl waiting for him at the roadside. She was not smiling, yet her whole look seemed a smile. She was standing with her chin uplifted, her eyelids a little drooped; he thought she was the most beautiful thing in all the beauty of the spring-kissed world.

"Don't move!" he said. "I just want to look at you!"

The LAND of CONTENT

Then slowly the smile came. She turned her head away to look at him roguishly, sideways.

"Is that all you want?" she asked.

"No!" he cried, explosively; and with a little bubbling laugh she sprang up to the empty place at his side, and turned her face towards him.

Presently he asked, looking off to the mountain with a very casual air.

"Have you seen Grace to-day?"

Rosamund looked at him anxiously. "Not to-day! Isn't she well?"

"Oh, I thought you might like to see her. I'm on my way there now," he said.

"Oh, do you remember," she asked, "the first day you took me there?"

"Do I remember?" he repeated. "I remember a good many things."

"Don't tease—be serious! Do you remember, that was the first of all our drives together, and this is——"

"Well, not quite the last, I hope!"

"No! But—the last—until there will be a difference!"

"It's a difference I welcome, sweet!" he declared; and at the look in his eyes she put up her hands to ward him away.

"No, no! Not now!" she said, in one of the

The LAND of CONTENT

sudden shy reserves that he adored, for all their tormenting him. "I want to tell you about my letters."

He read them, smiling with her over each one; but there was no time for comment then, for they were stopping before the Tobets' house, and White Rosy was looking inquiringly around at them.

Ogilvie led the way into the cottage. It seemed strangely quiet. Joe came from the inner room, grinned at them in a friendly way, and Ogilvie motioned to Rosamund to go in.

The quiet, the presence of Joe at that time of day, something in the doctor's manner, all made her pause; Ogilvie held the door open for her, but he was looking at Joe as men look when they understand each other.

"Oh! What is it?" Rosamund breathed, and he turned to her, still smiling.

"Go in," he said. "It's the loveliest sight in God's world, isn't it, Joe?"

The smile left Joe's face, but not his eyes. "It be," he agreed, emphatically, and began very vigorously to rattle the stove.

Within the darkened room Grace lay; and although the little place was decked with its gayest of quilt and curtain, although Grace's face shone with a radiance as of heaven itself, Rosamund saw only the wee brown head in the hollow of her arm.

The LAND of CONTENT

She went slowly forward, awed in the presence of the newly awakened soul in such a tiny form. Grace smiled up at her.

"Joe says he's that glad he favors me!" she whispered, and nestled her cheek against the downy head.

Such simple words, and so momentous an event! Just humble pride that the father of her child rejoiced in his son's likeness to his mother! A cheek against a baby's forehead, an old agony forgotten! The master-marvel of all creation sleeping upon the breast so lately wrung in torture! Such innocence, such purity, blessing and cleansing the house of all sin and sorrow, of shame and bitterness! God's breath in the new life, His ever recurring purpose of Love redeeming!

Rosamund could find no fitting words before the miracle. The joyous words of an ancient song echoed in her heart, "Mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation!"

But she was far from ready for her own *Nunc Dimittis*. The future drew her, life was welcoming her to its fulfillment. She kissed the pale, smiling mother, went swiftly from the room, past the two men whom she saw through a blur of tears, and out to the road where spring was waiting.

There, presently, Ogilvie joined her. Her look deeply stirred him. Her eyes were darker than he

The LAND of CONTENT

had ever seen them, darker than he thought they could be—or was it, he wondered, that he lost the sense of their color in sounding the promise that welled up from their depths? The promise he read there was a reflection of the revelation of those moments in Grace's room. So might Mary's eyes have looked when she bowed before the angel. For a moment they looked silently at each other; then, with a little sobbing indrawn breath, she withdrew her gaze and he took his place beside her.

He urged White Rosy's reluctant feet toward a rough wood-road that led up the mountain. For a while neither spoke. The air was full of little fitful pauses and quickly blown breaths of fragrance. A white petal fluttered from somewhere and caught, trembling, in her hair. A bee passed so near their faces, in his eager quest for sweetness, that they drew quickly back. Against the blue of the sky a hawk circled slowly, with no visible motion of pinion, seeking in vain in the unfolding life of earth for something dead to feast upon. The woods were hushed, and from their moist recesses faint vapors rose, wraithlike spirits of departing winter, and melted off in the warm sweetness of the air.

After a while they came to an open space, the scar of some old fire, from which they could look across the great plain below, back toward the Sum-

The LAND of CONTENT

mit and the blackened spot that had been Rosamund's cherished home a few weeks before, and down upon the roof of the little house that sheltered Grace and her baby. White Rosy stopped, looked down at the faint green of the fields and whinnied; then she took up her roadside feasting. "See that bluebird," Ogilvie presently said, pointing. "See the blue flash of his wing! See—ah, there's his mate!"

They watched the flight of the bird until his mate had lured him out of sight. Then Ogilvie turned to her. "Rosamund," he said, "I have something to tell you—something to ask."

She smiled at him. "Something more?"

"Oh, there will always be something more! There always is—human love being not only human! But—I have had an offer of a professorship—a new chair that has lately been given in the University of the North."

He paused, as if waiting for a question from her; but she said nothing.

"You will go with me?" It was scarcely a question; she smiled, remembering how he always took for granted that she would do his will.

"Of course," she said, quietly.

"It would mean great things for me," he went on, as one reading from an open page. "The university, the quickening life there; the unlimited power

The LAND of CONTENT

to search out; everything to work with, and then—success, success and—fame!”

He paused, and drew a deep breath or two before he went on. When he spoke again a new quality had come into his voice.

“But what if I do not go? What if I give it up? What if I stay here?”

He turned to her now, his eyes burning with his question; for, this time, question indeed it was, and not the old demand.

“Will you stay with me?”

Her look grew softer, holding almost the reassuring sweetness of a mother. It was as if she wished to smile away his doubt.

“Of course,” she said, again.

She had long since come to know that he was the least given to expressing his feelings when they were most deeply stirred. The very intensity of his emotion seemed to bind him. Now he looked at her, and he flushed very deeply; yet still he made no move to embrace her.

“You are made for the highest and best, Rosamund. I am offering you only the commonplace!”

She looked off over the valley with unseeing eyes. She, too, had her vision.

“‘Only the commonplace!’ What is that, John? Is it life, and love, and service?”

The LAND of CONTENT

"It may be," he said, and drew her to him.

She felt for his hand, and let her own creep under its warmth. Together they looked again at the familiar scene before them, colored now with their own dreams. Presently, recalling something of an earlier time, she said.

"It's the land of content, John!"

He repeated the words, as if their music, but half understood, sounded sweet in his ears. "The land of content?"

"They are Mother Cary's words," she told him. "Aren't they like her—so quaint and true, and so wise! She told me once that we must all know doubt and pain and sorrow, if we would cross the threshold of happiness, into the land of content."

He said nothing; but she knew from his look that he was sharing her vision.

"Cecilia—Eleanor—they think they know it, too, I suppose—poor dears!"

Ogilvie threw back his head and laughed. Then he looked at her with a smile in his eyes—the smile, half tenderness and half pity, that we give to a beloved child who thinks he has just discovered a new truth.

"And you are the only one who knows anything about it?" he teased.

"Oh, you, too!" she said.

The LAND of CONTENT

"Thanks! I'm glad you let me in!" But he grew serious again. "Do you know," he said, "I have a suspicion that your land of content is wherever love is?"

She brushed his shoulder with her cheek. "I shouldn't wonder!" she said.

But White Rosy was not interested in such speculation. Evidently having decided that dinner was more to be desired than the view, she set off down the road, at her briskest trot, toward the valley. They laughed; but neither would have thought of restraining White Rosy when she had taken the control of affairs upon herself.

"But I hate to come down from the high places," Ogilvie protested. "She's an old tyrant, a materialist!"

He had brought from the intensity of his emotions all a lover's clamoring to prolong the hour alone with the beloved. His visions now went no farther than the sweet reality beside him.

She laughed back at him. "I'm not going to let you offend her, though; I want to keep her always on my side. And we can take our high places with us!"

That turned him serious again for the moment.

The LAND of CONTENT

Are you sure," he asked her, "that you can be satisfied to remain here?"

"Here, or anywhere——" She paused, and he, reassured, smiled at her.

"Go on," he urged. "Go on! You were going to say something very nice to me! I want to hear it!"

But she looked curiously embarrassed. "I—I was not going to say anything of the kind! I was thinking of—something!"

Then she took her courage firmly in hand. "John," she said, "did you guess that—that it was I—who—gave that professorship?"

His eyes opened wide. "Why, no!" he said. "Did you? Well, now, I think that was a very good thing to do! How did you happen to think of it?"

"Oh—it was a sort of thank-offering—and a sort of experiment."

He looked around at her. "Oh! It was! Well, don't you try any more of your experiments on me!"

"John—have you known, all along, about—about my horrid money?"

He looked at her quizzically. "Well—yes. I knew. Oh, I knew, of course! But—it isn't one of the things that counts, is it?"

The LAND of CONTENT

He smiled at her, sure of her agreeing. She drew a long breath.

“No,” she said, “it doesn’t seem to be one of the things that count.”

There seemed to be no further need for words; neither spoke again until White Rosy stopped before Mother Cary’s gate. Then Rosamund turned her face toward Ogilvie.

“To-morrow!” she said.

His lips trembled. “To-morrow,” he replied, “and all the to-morrows!”

THE
NEW YORK
SOCIETY LIBRARY

THE END

